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Ladies and Gentlemen,—By the request of the Committee of the College, it has this year fallen to my part to address you on the present occasion. In fulfilling this duty, I propose to take the opportunity to offer a few remarks on the nature and objects of that branch of the College studies which has been entrusted to my care, and on the spirit in which, as I conceive, it ought to be cultivated. I hope that, in so doing, I shall avoid the appearance of seeking unduly to magnify the work with which it is my lot to be chiefly occupied; and if I should seem to dwell too exclusively on one or two portions only of the course of education given in this place, it will be remembered, that it is solely on that with which I am myself more immediately concerned, that I propose at all to touch.

The very prominent place which has been assigned, by nearly all Christian communities of modern times, to the study of the Scriptures, in the education more particularly of their ministers, has resulted, almost of necessity, from the important part which, either directly or through the instrumentality of the Church, the Bible has sustained in the past history of a large portion of mankind. It is not, however, my present purpose either to trace minutely, or to seek to account for, the growth of the remarkable influence now referred to. It stands before us, I apprehend, as an indisputable fact of the past, and of the present too; the main features of which it does not require many words to present, at least in outline, before us. The fact alluded to you may look at under two different aspects, of which the first is not frequently mentioned, and is not, indeed, very striking in comparison with the other; but it is, nevertheless, real, and deserving of our notice. It is that in which the Bible is beheld as a great source or stimulus of intellectual and literary activity, existing in the world and acting through many successive ages, and over a considerable portion of our race. And this it has undoubtedly been in the most extraordinary degree. For go back in imagination even to the centuries that preceded the existence of Christianity, and you see that, among the Jewish people, the one great centre of all knowledge, and stimulator of mental exertion, was the Old Tes-

tament. Almost everything that was written among this people, in the later period of their history, had some kind of relation to their sacred books. It was to comment on, and to explain, their Law; to transfer it out of the old and fast-decaying tongue, and to make it accessible in the common language of the day; or else to turn it into that other living language of the times, which was destined soon itself to become a sacred tongue, to far larger multitudes than had ever as yet revered the older Testament; it was thus to perpetuate and diffuse, in some form or other, the more ancient Scriptures, that the mental activity and skill of the Hebrew people were largely employed, even long before the same kind of exertion was called forth in connection with the Christian Scriptures. And after the latter had been composed and had taken their place among the great influences of the world, down from the time of the early Fathers of the Church, through long centuries of the past, even to our own day, who shall count, or in any way estimate, the vastness of the labours of the same kind which this book of books has called forth? To so remarkable a degree has the Bible been a stimulator of the human intellect; an educator, in fact, not only of the moral and religious faculties of men, but also of their intellectual and literary powers. It would, in short, be difficult to describe the blank which there must have been in the world, had not this book thus existed, and proved itself so potent an agent among the various influences of the past.

But it is in the second of the two aspects to which I have referred, that the place occupied by the Scriptures is most clearly beheld. It is in that higher spiritual power which they have exercised, and which has impressed itself so deeply upon the laws and customs, the languages and the literatures, of civilized nations. Assuredly, in this point of view, the Bible has been a great instrument of Divine Providence; and whatever opinion any one may entertain as to the *cause* of this hold of the Scriptures upon half the world, the fact itself cannot be denied. So that, if it were ever among the designs of the Supreme Wisdom that from that little land of Judea a mighty power should go forth among the nations, and mould and rule their thoughts and their conduct, whether for good or for ill, that design has been fulfilled in this case in the most signal and undeniable manner.

It is hardly necessary, on this occasion, to bring forward evidence of the extent and importance of the power which has thus been exercised by our Scriptures. Were it required to do so, we should not have far to look for what we want. Throughout our own country, for example, as in many another, the one book which is usually found in almost every home, which cares much to possess a book at all, is the Bible; and from this the young, in perhaps the majority of such cases, receive the first elements of their moral, or even of their intellectual, culture; while the

older and the aged also find here, in innumerable cases, their most effectual lessons of religious consolation and hope. To what intelligent person, throughout Christian lands, is the Lord's Prayer unknown, with the great religious truths which that simple and beautiful formula embodies; its faith in the One God our Father in heaven, the recognition of his providence and of our dependence on Him, the confession of our sinfulness, and the supplication that He in his mercy will forgive us our sins? And in addition to this kind of private and individual influence, there is another, equally evident, of a more public and national character. Some not unimportant laws of Christian nations have either directly come to us, or have been suggested and modified, from this source; while our weekly day of rest, with its opportunities of instruction and devotion, is an additional example to the same effect. We might appeal even to some of those doctrines which we regard as corrupt forms of Christian truths in proof of the same thing; for consider how, in several remarkable instances, they maintain their ground, with all the obscurity and difficulty that may hang around them, solely from the circumstance that they are believed to be founded on the teaching of Holy Writ.

The primary source of this great and wide-spread influence is, no doubt, to be sought for in the fact, that from the earliest period the Scriptures have been looked upon, with more or less of distinct, intelligent recognition, as being, or at least as containing, the *Word of God;* or, in other terms, as containing the record of the Divine revelations to mankind. Men have differed, indeed, as to what the substance of such revelations actually is; they do still widely differ on this point; but the great majority of those among whom the book has been reverenced have yet agreed, in various ways, in making the acknowledgment referred to. It is not here my object to enter upon any consideration of the question, how far, or in what sense, this belief regarding the character of the Bible is a true one. I am rather anxious to point out, what yet I suppose few persons would formally deny, the reality of the influences in our daily life which have proceeded from this source; and further to suggest that (account for this power as you may) it has been of *such moment* in the world, and is now such, that one who would wish to act the part of a religious teacher among his fellow-men,—who would wish to influence usefully the public feeling and sentiment of his country in connection with matters of religion,—who is contented, also, to take men around him as they are, with their knowledge or their ignorance, their belief or their unbelief, their right or wrong notions of Christian doctrines and moral duties,—will be under the necessity, as a general rule, if not of always using the Bible as an instrument of his labours, yet of being able to do so whenever occasion may require. In short, not only does the fact of

its actual position in the world, not only does such legitimate authority as this book may be reasonably thought to be entitled to, require that a religious teacher of the present day should be well informed, in regard to the various questions connected with its history and interpretation; but even the very errors of belief and practice to which it has given origin, or which are in any way involved in the character ascribed to it—the false doctrines and pretensions claiming to be founded upon it—the practical untruth and unrighteousness which any one may think he discerns arising from misapprehension respecting it, and which he may wish to counteract or destroy—all these things render indispensable to a religious teacher of our time the most thorough mastery over the great subject of the Bible, in its manifold phases, which he is capable of attaining.

In stating this position in this form, I am aware that I am taking what many may consider but a low view of the claim of the Scriptures to our attention. I prefer, however, to understate rather than to overstate on such a subject as this; and would wish to base the cultivation of sacred learning, as a part of the education of a minister of religion, rather on the ground of its own practical utility in the actual state of religious knowledge among us, than on any right that may be maintainable for the Scriptures as being the very depository of the word of God. But, indeed, it is hardly necessary to dwell longer on this point. It may seem little requisite thus to plead this cause, before the friends and supporters of an Institution, which from its commencement, good part of a century ago, has assigned so considerable a space to this portion of its studies; before the members of a religious community, too, by one of the public organs of which measures have but recently been originated for the issue of a revised translation of the Old Testament,—a work which will doubtless be carried out, unless, again, what is so much more to be desired, a success, hardly perhaps to be anticipated, should await the more comprehensive proposal of the distinguished President of our College, the honourable Member for North Lancashire, to procure a revision of the whole English Bible under the sanction of the Legislature,—a result which would, I presume, render unnecessary the attempt to effect the same end in any other quarter.

Leaving, therefore, this part of my subject, let me briefly endeavour to indicate, to what extent and with what objects biblical studies can be pursued in this place. In few words, the object here aimed at is to give the student the power of reading and interpreting for himself, with tolerable ease and confidence, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original tongues. I do not mean that, within the limits of our College course, the whole Bible can be carefully read and interpreted, in the classes engaged in this work. When

sufficient allowance is made for other studies, so much as this implies is not practicable; but, at the same time, a considerable portion, embracing some of the most interesting books, *can* be minutely read and explained, and such a foundation of general knowledge on these subjects can be laid, as to enable the student, if he should choose, or should have occasion to continue such studies in after years, to do so with facility and with success.

It is not, perhaps, necessary to enter, at any length, upon the subject of the means and processes by which the object just stated is sought to be attained; but I will venture to say a few words on this point. It is evident, in the first place, that a considerable portion of our attention ought to be given to the languages of the Scriptures. In the case of the New Testament, this, as a rule, is amply provided for in those classes of the Greek language in which a sufficient proportion of the student's time is engaged during the earlier years of his course, as well as in the more advanced classes on the same subject in the later years. By the former are meant the Greek classes of University College, attended by undergraduates; and by the latter, those of our own College for reading in each session some Greek book in connection with the course of Ecclesiastical History, attended by students who have graduated, or who have at least entered upon their Theological years. In these different classes, then, provision is made for the attainment of an adequate acquaintance with the Greek language; and, by means of the knowledge and training which they may reasonably be presumed to give, the student is of course placed, at the same time, in a position to pursue advantageously the study of the New Testament in the original. In regard more particularly to the latter, I need perhaps only observe, that the plan at present pursued differs, in some measure, from that which was usual, previous to the removal to London. Instead of confining the subject to a single session, or at most two, at the end of the course, and so compressing within a brief space of time what is really in itself a very extensive department of learning, it is thought better to begin the actual work of New Testament interpretation with the commencement of the period of College study. By thus pursuing this portion of our work through several, perhaps even five or six, years in succession, it is hoped that the more important books may be read through in a minute and careful manner, and a fair degree of attention be also given to the various important questions which arise in connection with them, by each student who goes through the full College course.

In regard to the Old Testament, it has, I believe, from the foundation of Manchester New College, been the rule to make the Hebrew language a part of the Theological course. In doing this, our Institution has but followed the usual practice of the Colleges, or Academies, of what has been distinguished as the Old Dissent. And that this is a wise and proper plan, I need not

probably, before my present audience, enter upon any argument to shew. Every consideration that may be urged in favour of the careful study of the Bible, may, with little change or qualification, be pleaded in behalf of the maintenance among us of some knowledge of the original language of the Hebrew Scriptures. Nor is this all that may be said on the same side. The Hebrew language is one which is so different in grammatical structure, and in some other respects, from the languages with which we of these western lands are most familiar, that its study really seems to offer, to one who intelligently pursues it, a new and instructive insight into the mental capacities of man. The person, for illustration, who has only a knowledge of one language can have little idea of those different forms of thought, which are as familiar to those who habitually use another language as are his own to himself, or of those different aspects under which the very same outward object may be conceived of, according to what we sometimes term the *genius* of a people, or of the language which they use. Hence it is evident that, in proportion as any one can enlarge the circle of his knowledge in these matters, and can appreciate for himself such differences—originating, as they seem to do, not merely in any outward features or qualities of objects, but even in the creative energy of the mind itself,—he will be the more able to estimate and value aright the native powers and tendencies of his own spiritual being. This, indeed, is a consideration which is, in some measure, applicable to all languages; but it is more largely true of one which greatly differs from your own. Besides this fact, again, it may evidently be pleaded in favour of the study of Hebrew as a part of our College course, that it affords the same kind of exercise of the intellect and the taste, the same discipline of the faculties of judgment and concentration, which may be affirmed of the study of any other language, and which is rightly considered to be a sufficient recommendation of this part of education, independent of any positive results of knowledge which the new language may give. But, in truth, it seems little necessary to insist on such points as these, in support of the claim of this ancient and venerable tongue to some share of our time and attention. The Hebrew literature is possessed of a character and a value of its own, which may well secure for it the continued and reverential study of all who do not think that the present and the future of mankind can owe nothing to the past, and feel impelled either to trace the first beginnings and early progress of men in several of the main features of their mental life, or to explore to their source and wisely employ some of the great influences that act among us at the present time. As revealing to us, then, the life of a primitive people, called by Divine Providence to hold a most singular place in the world; as containing the richest store of devout thought; as having been to our modern civilization, through the legal, the moral, the religious elements which it embodies and preserves

for us, a constant source of inspiration, whether for good or ill; as presenting us also with examples both of poetry and prose, which, by their various excellence, take the highest rank among compositions of their several kinds;—the Hebrew literature, coming down to us from so high an antiquity, and deserving as it is to be characterized in such terms as these, may well be left without any more formal argument to set forth its claims on us, as friends and promoters of an enlightened and comprehensive education for our ministers. I will, therefore, only state further in relation to it, that it is our endeavour, in the conduct of the College, to assign a due proportion of time to this subject; and although it is certainly true that, with the varying tastes and aptitudes of individuals, some students can make but little progress, yet others, it is hoped, from time to time, gain no inconsiderable knowledge. It is thought most desirable, on the whole, that this study should be commenced immediately on entering the College, and pursued through the successive years of the course. Thus time is afforded to those who are moderately capable and diligent, not only for obtaining a sufficient acquaintance with the language, but also for reading, in whole or in part, some of the more interesting books; among which may be mentioned the book of Genesis, the Psalms, Isaiah, Job, and some of the Minor Prophets. At the same time, the student acquires the power of entering, with intelligence, on the discussion of some of the more important questions which present themselves, in connection with various parts of the Old Testament,—questions which, although they may to some extent seem to be of a merely speculative or merely literary character, and to have but little bearing on the future duties of the ministry, ought not, for several reasons, to be altogether passed over in the course of instruction given in this place.

For it will be obvious enough, on but slight consideration, that the practical work of acquiring and employing the language of either Testament, of which I have thus far spoken, is not the only form under which it is necessary to take up and to pursue the study of the Bible. It is not well possible to read profitably any ancient author, without some previous knowledge as to who he was and when he lived, as to the circumstances of his times and of his life, the persons to whom he addressed himself, and other points of a similar nature. Such questions as these, embracing the whole field of Biblical Antiquities, Chronology, and History, necessarily arise in connection with the Old and with the New Testament. They cannot be evaded, or lost sight of, by one who would be thoroughly master of his subject. They render necessary, therefore, in the second place, some discussion of a class of topics, the extent and difficulty of which, with the various minor questions which they involve, are such as no one, perhaps, who is not practically conversant with these matters, can rightly

estimate. We may refer, for an example, to a purely critical subject, the settlement of the text of the New Testament,—a task upon which incredible pains have been bestowed, and which, it may be, is hardly yet to be regarded as finally accomplished. One who would take up this task and pursue it with any great degree of independence, seeing everything with his own eyes, and testing and judging for himself, even with such forerunners as Griesbach and Tischendorf to direct him, must spend no small portion of a lifetime upon the work. Happily, it is not necessary for any of us to dwell thus upon such a subject. We may well be contented to accept, in great measure, the results which the zeal and labour of others may win for us. But yet it is far from desirable, and would be little creditable to a Theological Academy like ours, entirely to leave out and neglect even this part of the subject. In our own case, it is found practicable to devote to it a portion of two of the later years of the course; comprising, in the one, a brief review of Old Testament criticism, and of the main facts and principles which belong to it; and, in the other, the same review in connection with the New Testament. Again, when we turn to the more important division of Exegesis, the office of which is to *explain the sense* of the Scriptures, the questions which present themselves in immediate connection with the work of the interpreter, and without some kind of solution of which, either implied or avowed, it is hardly possible to proceed, are of very varied, often difficult, and at the same time most interesting, character. For instance, there is the subject of the origin and structure of the Mosaic books, that of the authenticity of the latter part of Isaiah, and other similar topics in the case of the Old Testament; while in the New, there is the question of the origin and connection of the first three Gospels, involving as it does, in an important degree, the further question of the historical reality of the narrated life of Christ; there is the subject of the authorship and interpretation of the fourth Gospel, and that of the New Testament language respecting the death of Christ. These are examples of the kind of inquiry which must receive some degree of notice, in the course of anything like a careful prosecution of the work of an interpreter of the Scriptures.

This being the case, it may well be a point for the anxious consideration of the teacher, how far he can usefully enter upon the discussion of such subjects as these, in the necessarily short period of time which can alone be afforded by the Theological years of the College course. Some of these topics might singly very well occupy a whole session, if studied with the minuteness and fulness with which they might be treated, and if the various works of even the more important scholars were to receive each its share of our attention. I need hardly state that it is not found possible, in our case, to give any such amount of time to

these matters as their own intrinsic importance, or interest, might seem to require. It is, however, thought desirable to devote the greater part of one of the later Theological years to inquiries of this kind in the division of the New Testament, and another of those years to the similar topics in that of the Old—both independently of the time bestowed on the actual study of the language, and the reading and interpretation of each.

In making this statement, I would explain that it has always seemed to me more desirable that great, well-established, facts and principles should, in what is essentially an elementary course of instruction, be presented to the student and made his familiar and sure possession, than that he should be led on to occupy himself at an early period, and perhaps prematurely, with the more difficult and obscure portions of his subject, or with what may be termed mere novelties of speculation, attractive and interesting as the latter may doubtless sometimes be. In each department of human knowledge at all worthy of the name, there will be found certain clearly-ascertained facts or leading principles, which serve as starting-points whence further progress must be made, or as the firm foundation on which the fabric of conjecture and speculation can alone, with any chance of stability, be reared. It is so in the case of that great field of learning now under our notice; and hence, as I have suggested, the necessity that those who are but entering upon it should seek to familiarize themselves, in the first instance, with the positive and admitted results which the researches of past times have won for us, much more than with the newest theories and discussions, however striking, or ingenious, or "original," such things may often appear. Indeed, it requires not many words to shew us, that no man can be well qualified to discuss and pass judgment on the more abstruse or advanced points of any given science, who has not made himself fairly master of the elementary truths of the same science. Moreover, the case of the individual mind is, in some sense, analogous, in these pursuits, to that of the whole series of students in the same field, through successive years or even ages. At the commencement of that series, and with the earlier cultivators of a science, you will find abundant traces of imperfect knowledge; step after step something better is attained, not in any way springing up into existence of itself, apart from, and independent of, what has been previously learnt, but as a fitting consequence of earlier and imperfect stages, the very errors and mistakes of the past serving to guide or to warn the later student, and so to aid him in his pursuit of higher and purer truth. Thus it is that the earlier stages, rude, imperfect, erroneous, as they may have been, are yet the necessary conditions and preliminaries of the more perfect knowledge; and so, again, conversely, we nowhere find results of knowledge, which have been won by the long-continued toil and thought of successive

minds, susceptible of being at once worthily received and appreciated, by those who have not gone through much of the same preparatory mental discipline experienced in their attainment. We need not say that *every* earlier stage, whether of truth or of error, must be again passed by the individual student in order that he may adequately understand and value the final gain; but still it is true, that the more complete and varied the elementary training which the mind has received in any given case, the more fully and profitably will it enter into, comprehend, appropriate as its own, the latest and highest results finally attained.

Applying this general statement to the case now before us, may it not be said with truth, that the main purpose of a course of study devoted to such subjects as those which have been mentioned, and offered to young minds of fair average intelligence and knowledge, should be to communicate to them great fundamental truths and principles, so far as these exist at all,—such fundamental truths and principles as may serve to enable their possessor to form his judgment of the various controverted questions that may arise, when he comes to their consideration, and put him in a position to pursue each subject hereafter, if he be so disposed, into its furthest, or most difficult, or most obscure and doubtful, complications and consequences. I may be allowed to refer to a definite topic in illustration of my meaning. Take, then, the case of those views respecting the origin of Christianity and of the books of the New Testament, of which we sometimes hear under the name of the doctrines, or the writings, of the Tübingen school. However important and interesting these may be, no one, I suppose, could take them up as fitting subjects of elementary study; because to treat of them, to discuss or pass sentence upon them, with anything like the intelligence and skill which they demand, implies the possession of a very large amount of preliminary knowledge,—of that very knowledge which it is a principal object of our labours in this place to gain. Hence, therefore, while certainly a few leading facts, bearing on this topic, may very properly be introduced in their appropriate connection, yet the more full investigation of it must necessarily be left to future years. And so it is in reference to some other great sections of biblical learning. For instance, the whole subject of the origin and structure of the Pentateuch; it is hardly possible, in a course of study devoted to the Old Testament, to pass over this without more or less of discussion. But this, too, is a subject which can only be treated in outline, and which must come near the end, rather than at the beginning, of our course; while any really complete and exhaustive investigation of it must, indeed, stand over, to be followed out by those who may, in after years, find that they have time and inclination for such a work.

I have, however, said perhaps more than enough on this head; and I will now pass on to speak briefly of another point, which

ought not to be entirely omitted in this connection. The immediate object of the interpreter of Scripture, is evidently to attain the meaning designed by the author to be communicated to those for whom he originally wrote. The student may intend to employ this ascertained meaning in various ways; it may be to gain a knowledge of historical facts; or to learn what some particular writer may have thought on any subject of interest; or to frame for himself an outline of the principal truths or doctrines taught by the chief authors of either Testament. Whatever his ultimate object may be, his first aim must be to ascertain the original sense; and for this purpose he uses the various aids and appliances which the accumulated knowledge of past times has placed within his reach. Now it is one of the happy privileges of this place, enjoyed both by teacher and by student, that this end of scriptural interpretation *can* be sought in the most free and fearless manner. Still, as always in the past history of our Institution, is this liberty of interpretation conceded; and we may form and express our conclusions as to what a Paul or a John may have written, without any fear that, in so doing, we may possibly break any rule of faith, or run counter to any established creed or articles of religion. This full and precious liberty claims a distinct acknowledgment on this occasion. It also suggests the hope and the prayer, that it may never degenerate, in our hands, unto undevout or reckless licence, but may remain still under the guidance of the same reverent, conscientious and truthful spirit, by which it was so effectually both animated and guarded in the hands of our predecessors. But, further, the possession of the liberty to which I refer is surely indispensable to the attainment of the best results of positive truth, and a necessary condition of any good and sure progress in the cultivation of sacred learning. To its absence may doubtless be attributed, in no small degree, the confessedly low state of biblical learning in this country. You can hardly take up any work of recent times, coming from the midst of our great religious denominations and treating of religious subjects, without being made aware, in some form, of the want of the liberty of which I am speaking, and of which the author also, it may be, is himself more or less conscious. Hence that reference, if not expressed, yet from time to time implied, to some external standard of right thought; as well as those efforts, from time to time apparent, to shew that this or that sense of a phrase is not contrary to this or that article, or that such and such an article does not condemn such and such an interpretation. A state of things like this is not only unfavourable to intellectual and literary activity and excellence, but deadening and darkening in its influence to moral sensibility and energy; and where artificial checks and difficulties of this kind come to be admitted, as belonging to the normal position of such matters, you have little

reason to expect any other results than those which we actually behold:—a secret, hardly perhaps acknowledged, fear of modern learning, even in the departments of physical science, as unfavourable to religion; a timid clinging to the forms and thoughts of two or three hundred years ago; a slow and unwilling acceptance, in some cases, of even the surest results of recent investigation; and along with all this, indeed its necessary accompaniment and expression, a comparatively backward and dependent condition of most of those branches of knowledge which may be classed under the heads of biblical literature and religious philosophy. It will be our highest happiness and best success, if we can shew that a full and true liberty in all these subjects of sacred criticism and exegesis, is not inconsistent with a devout, religious spirit; and that a minister of religion may possess a well-furnished mind, taught and disciplined in the various learning that may aid or adorn his profession, and at the same time retain the most entire earnestness and devotion to the practical duties of his position.

We may be well assured, at all events, that the present is no time for letting down, in any way, the character of the education here provided for those who are to become our ministers. If we would keep our place, as a religious community, among the great religious bodies of our time, and would hope to appeal with equal success to the growing intelligence of our countrymen, we must evidently not be behind those bodies in our efforts for this cause. We are informed that, among them, both in our own country and on the continent, and even in the great Roman Catholic Church, the importance of securing, in the work of the ministry, the services of thoroughly educated and accomplished, as well as earnest and devout, men, is increasingly felt; and that corresponding efforts are being put forth to meet the demand. And it must surely be so among ourselves. For it is clearly a mistake to suppose, as some might be inclined to do, that it is only the poorer and less-educated classes who need, or care for, the services and the influences of religion. A little reflection on our own personal consciousness, as well as even a hasty glance over the surface of society around us, might serve to remove this impresssion; and might shew us that, notwithstanding the absorbing interest of war and politics, religion, in its various topics and bearings, still maintains, and will maintain, its hold upon the thoughts of most cultivated minds. Such, at least, is my own firm conviction of the reality and force of the spiritual wants and capacities of our common human nature. But it is evident enough that they who would seek to cherish and to guide these tendencies, and turn them to good purposes, must not themselves be, in any way, morally or intellectually, inferior to those to whom they would desire thus to minister. A rough, unskilful hand can here do no good, but may do infinite harm. It is surely a mis-

take, also, to suppose that matters of mere biblical learning are altogether without interest to the same class of persons. There are questions of the simply historical and critical character, as well as of the purely religious and philosophical, which have been eagerly discussed in recent times—taken up by those whose attention might have been supposed to be absorbed by literature, politics, or science. This may shew us the essential and durable interest of these things; and may help us to see that their skilful, well-timed discussion, in the hands of one who is not bound to a system and can speak with freedom and power, may be made to serve the cause of true knowledge, of virtue, humanity and social progress. But then, to answer such ends as these, they must be treated with sound learning and with delicacy of touch; without dogmatism and with a simple regard to truth. One of the main uses of our Institution, in its several departments, we may hope will be, to shew those who study with us something of the depth and breadth of these questions; and thus to help them to maintain, in relation to them, a candid, well-balanced, truth-seeking spirit, not being too lightly disheartened by difficulties, nor too readily led away by every new theory proposed for their solution.

Much of what I have just said in reference to the more educated classes, is equally applicable to those whom we may be accustomed to think and speak of as the poor and the uneducated. In the homes of many of the working men of our land, Thought, on some of the greatest questions of human interest, is incessantly busy; and he who would go among them to offer the ministrations of religion, must not be unprepared to meet even with great acuteness and great knowledge.

There is one other portion of our studies which might, had we the time, have claimed a brief notice here; I allude to the subject of the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. I must not, however, attempt to enter upon this at present; but rather leave it, with one or two other points, without further notice. I will therefore now bring this addresss to a close, adding to what I have said but one sentence more; and that shall be, with all earnestness and kindness, to remind such of our students as may now hear me, of the inestimable value of those rapidly passing years of preparatory study which they spend in this place; of the influence which this period, no inconsiderable section of a lifetime, must have upon their own future usefulness and happiness; and of the grave responsibility which rests upon them, the learners, in common with us who are teachers, to employ wisely, and as doing a good work in the sight of God and man, the opportunities of both moral and intellectual culture now enjoyed; and so, finally, to prepare themselves to the utmost, under the Divine blessing, to become faithful and effective ministers among their fellow-men of "Christ's holy Gospel."

THOUGHTS ON SECULAR ATHEISM.

Chapter I.*

the atheism and (so-called) secularism of the present day.

While "Secularism" has thus had the leading place assigned to it by the modern English Atheists, their theoretical statement of principles appears to be much less dogmatic and absolute than was formerly the case. They do not so strongly insist that there is no God, as that there is no knowing anything about the matter. They do not absolutely affirm that the world made itself, or grew of itself, or came by chance, or from the concourse of atoms, or by the sovereign will of gravitation or electricity, nor that it has existed from eternity by necessity or blind fate; but they take upon themselves to declare that nobody knows or can rationally believe anything whatever about the matter. They are the professed disciples of contented, incurious ignorance, rather than of clear-headed, bold negation; doubters rather than deniers; Pyrrhonists more properly than Atheists. They say we cannot prove the existence of a Supreme Mind; they do not undertake to shew that the belief is unnecessary to solve existing phenomena. At least this seems the discreeter part chosen by some of the selected correspondents of the "Reasoner." The following is from a paper headed, "How did Animals originate?" (No. 221, p. 235):

"In No. 219 (Aug. 7), an 'Inquirer' puts the query which heads this paper. If I rightly comprehend the tenor of his remarks, he thinks that every one who doubts the being of a God, and considers matter to be the only possible existence, necessarily assumes the *onus probandi* of the whys and wherefores of all natural phenomena. This is an error with respect to Atheists which cannot be too emphatically repudiated. There is no reason in the world why, in the present age, we should take upon our shoulders, or allow others to place there as our fair burden, more than really belongs to us—as Atheists. To wit, I doubt the being of a God, because I have failed to find any evidence of his existence, either in fact or in imagination; but it does not necessarily follow from this doubt that I must be prepared to demonstrate how animals and plants originated, or be able to manufacture them myself from the raw material, Frankensteinwise. *I* am, but *why* I am is a question entirely distinct from the probable or possible existence of a God."

The "error so emphatically repudiated with respect to Atheists," is a very natural one. Theism denotes a certain theory with respect to the origin of the existing state of things, namely, that that state of things bespeaks Mind as engaged in its formation. Atheism, till now, has denoted an opposite theory, namely, that the existing order of things has originated without the controlling agency of Mind. As the Theistical theory may be held under various modifications, some Theists venturing to believe

* Continued from p. 602.

more definitely than others as to the steps of the process by which a Supreme Mind may be supposed to have formed the existing order of things, or to define more confidently than others the nature and attributes of that Mind,—so the Atheistical theory, denying the agency of a Supreme Mind, may have variously attempted to account for the phenomena in question by atomic attraction, by fate, by chance, by necessity, by appetence, by development, by gravitation, or any other supposed means; but to say that it is unconcerned with the question, "how plants and animals originated," is indeed a strange way of sustaining the claims of Atheism as a "Philosophy." Why the very question is one of cause and effect: effects known, seen, interrogated, to learn their cause. It is plain that the causes hitherto assigned instead of a Divine Mind, are but little satisfactory to some who call themselves Atheists. Another correspondent of the *Reasoner* (No. 204, p. 27) exhibits the same reluctance to propound a theory, while he has no hesitation or difficulty in refuting that of certain Theists:

"ATHEISM TESTED, IN AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN AND AN INFIDEL.

CHRISTIAN. What do you mean by Atheism?

ATHEIST. The rejection of all creeds pertaining to Deities or supernatural beings, as contrary to reason and derogatory to our understanding.

C. How, then, does an Atheist account for the wonderful arrangement and regular motion of the planetary system?

A. He does not pretend to account for it. He wishes for information on that head.

C. Then why discard the almost universal belief that it was formed by Deity?

A. Because it is a declaration unsupported by evidence and contrary to reason.

C. But could not an Infinite Power have performed this work in a manner inscrutable to the finite understanding of man?

A. The universe could not have originated according to the received notions of Jews and Christians.

C. What do you understand by the received notions of Christians upon creation?

A. That a God existed before all things, and made all things.

C. What is there contrary to reason in that?

A. It seems to me an impossibility.

C. I cannot perceive anything like inconsistency in supposing all things to have been created by God.

A. For all things to have been created by a God, that God must have existed before all things.

C. Acknowledged.

A. Then where, let me ask you, could he have been before he made anything?

C. That has not been revealed; and it is impious to make inquiry into matters that it has pleased God to shut from our sight.

A. Can it be criminal to make use of the common sense which nature —or, if you please, God—has given us?

C. God requires us to have faith where reason cannot comprehend.

A. That is to say, we are to believe whatever we are told, however questionable it may be—and with the fact before us that they who make the declaration are interested persons.

C. How interested?

A. Their worldly interest depends upon it. It is their trade."

It is not necessary to quote further. "The trade" of the writer of this dialogue seems to be, to set up the arguments most easily knocked down. His "Christian" is even a poorer dialectician than his "Infidel;" and that is saying much. This indisposition to propound any positive Atheistic theory is still more curiously shewn in the following singular attempt to exhibit the "positive pole of Atheism" as distinguished from its "negative pole." The "positive" seems only to be so on the grammatical principle of two negatives (and sometimes more) making an affirmative. It is indeed difficult to keep account of the negatives (*not*s, *un*s, *in*s and *im*s and *a*s) in such a sentence as this: "If any man have any *doubts*—no matter how *in*considerable they may be—of the *in*correctness of *A*theism, he is *not* an *A*theist; but having *no doubt* whatever of such *in*correctness, he is an Atheist." The writer himself, or else the printer, has evidently lost count of the couples in which negatives ought (according to Lindley Murray) to run, in order to bring out an affirmative at last for the positive pole. The whole paragraph is as follows (Reasoner, No. 212, p. 127), signed W. Chilton, the writer of the first quotation above:

"DEFINITION OF ATHEISM.

"Sir,—Atheism, like electricity, has both a negative and positive pole. The former rebuts the assumed truths of Theism; the latter affirms the probable truth of Non-theism. Though Atheism, primarily, is but the antithesis or negation of Theism, it is, nevertheless, as much an affirmative belief as is Theism: it is an active principle, a positive condition of the mind, a definite and settled conviction. If a man have any doubts —no matter how inconsiderable they may be—of the incorrectness of Atheism, he is not an Atheist; but, having no doubt whatever of such incorrectness, he is an Atheist. He not only disbelieves the *actual* existence of a God, but he questions the *probable*, and doubts even the *possible*, existence of such a being. An Atheist does not simply deny the reasonableness of Theism—he also asserts the reasonableness of Atheism."

"The incorrectness of Theism" was probably the intended expression in that strange sentence-full of negatives. But (admitting this important *erratum*) the "positive pole" brought out is still no positive view, no actual theory of the universe, but merely the "assertion of the reasonableness of Atheism." The conclusion of the article is in the following strain, *positive* only in the sense of dogmatical; for it is *negative* of all theory, understanding, conjecture or belief of *how* and *why*:

"From the foregoing premises, I define Atheism to be, a *positive dis-*

belief—after a fair and honest consideration of the phenomena of nature, the properties of matter, and the force of logic—of the *actual* or *necessary* existence of any God; and, also, a *positive belief* in the *improbability*, or even *possibility*, of any existence distinct from and superior to matter.

"The very essence of the God idea is, that of a *superior* existence. Now, if there be but *one thing* in existence, that one thing, whatever it may be, cannot be superior to itself. If matter *be* the *only thing* in existence—which every Atheist *must* believe, to be an Atheist—*there cannot be any God.*"

The above are contributions from approved and accepted correspondents of the *Reasoner*. Another extract, which has the editorial *imprimatur*, seems to offer a more positive theory, which we shall therefore examine. It is signed with the well-known initials, G. J. H., and is written expressly in reference to the remarks of an intelligent correspondent who calls himself *Edward Search*. The correspondent's letter is as follows (Reasoner, No. 224, p. 271):

"ATHEISM, SO CALLED.

"Dear Sir,—Will you put the vexed question before your readers in the following form?—

"Given,—The universe and its laws; that this globe is an infinitely small part thereof; that man is an extremely small part of the globe, and that his faculties are inadequate to comprehend the universe.

"Is it not more reasonable to believe that the universe is caused by a power we cannot comprehend, than that it exists without a cause?

EDWARD SEARCH."

The editor's remarks (in the same number) are as follows:

"CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE.

"The letter from Mr. Search, which will be found first in our Platform this week, though brief, has the pregnancy of well-considered brevity. True, human faculty is inadequate to the comprehension of the universe, and precisely on this account we cannot reasonably fall in with the opinion that it had a cause. Our knowledge of causes rests upon our observation of finite phenomena. Infinite phenomena may have been self-caused. The eternity of matter suggests this conclusion. The object for adopting any hypothesis is the clearing up of difficulties—but the hypothesis Mr. Search proposes, viz., that nature had a cause, is only compounding difficulties, not solving them. For if infinity had a cause, it is no longer infinity. Or granting that it had a cause, that cause must be definite; and, if definite, it had a cause too: if indefinite, we have only fled from one infinity to another—from the infinity of phenomena to the vaguer and unsubstantial infinity of conjecture.

"Further, to hold that the infinity of things had a cause, is to lower infinity into an effect—is to assume to comprehend it, while confessing we cannot comprehend it. Nature, therefore, in its integrity, in its vastness and majesty, we regard as uncaused, as being the great cause of all causes and effects, of which finite power can take cognizance.

G. J. H."

Here, then, at last, we have something like a positive Atheistic theory. Mr. Search, making the most modest demand possible

on behalf of Theism, suggests the reasonableness of believing "that the universe is caused by a power which we cannot comprehend," rather "than that it exists without a cause." The alternative, as stated and embraced by the *Reasoner*, is, "That nature, in its integrity, in its vastness and majesty, is uncaused, as being the great cause of all causes and effects, of which finite power can take cognizance." This, then, is the positive theory elicited at last from the discreet reserve of the modern English school of Atheism.

Of course, *Nature* in the reply means the same thing as *the Universe* in the question; otherwise it would be no reply at all. So this theory maintains that the Universe, or Nature, is uncaused, and is the cause of all causes and effects. But this is no proper answer to the real thought of the questioner, unless it be further stated whether this Nature, or this Universe, has, or has not, intelligence, moral attributes and will. If it has, this is virtually the confession of a God. Nature then is God. The Universe is God. For the intelligent and voluntary First Cause of all other causes and of all effects, itself uncaused (the Theist scarcely ventures to say "self-caused," but *self-existent*), is what we mean by God. But the tone of the answer evidently implies that the Universe, or Nature, is unintelligent, destitute of moral purpose and will, and yet is uncaused, and that its phenomena are self-caused. Is this, then, an intelligible and rational theory? Let us weigh the very words in which it is stated, with the care due to a theory which is designed to replace all our religious and scientific doubts and difficulties, as well as our religious faith,—which is to contrast with the alleged absurdity of the latter and with the confessed perplexity of the former, and to give us a calm, clear insight into those strange questions of cosmogony which perplex the reasonings of most of us, while they necessitate our faith in a spiritual Cause as the only approach towards their solution.

There are some curious postulates, or axioms (we hardly know which to call them), involved in the statement of the above theory.

One of these is, that while there may be phenomena which we cannot comprehend, there can be no causes but such as are level to our comprehension. To common apprehension it would appear more likely that phenomena beyond our comprehension must have causes beyond our comprehension too. But no. "Human faculty is inadequate to the comprehension of the universe, and precisely on this account we cannot reasonably fall in with the opinion that it had a cause."

A second of these postulates is the eternity of matter. It is here assumed without being argued. Now we do not take upon ourselves to decide at this moment whether matter is, or is not, eternal; but we say, the Atheistic argument against the eternity of a Divine Mind would, *a fortiori*, disprove the eternity of

matter. And, as the result of the two arguments, it might not be difficult to prove that there is no existence at present, either of matter or of mind, from the impossibility of conceiving how either existence began! But the eternity of matter is coolly assumed as a thought void of all difficulty; and it is curious to observe the facility with which assumptions are made on the side of Atheism, precisely correlative to those which are laughed to scorn when propounded by the Theist. Eternal matter is, to say the least, quite as difficult a conception as eternal mind; and the former, without the latter, is insufficient to account for the phenomena of design.

But the strangest assumption is, that phenomena may be "self-caused." "Infinite phenomena," says the *Reasoner*, "may have been self-caused." Is *self-causation*, then, to be the master-key which shall unlock the wonders of this mysterious universe? To most minds, "self-causation" implies being and not being at the same time, and is therefore a contradiction in terms, a pure logical absurdity. This absurdity is, by one of the *Reasoner's* contributors, charged erroneously upon the Theist, and made the occasion of coarse and profane ridicule. In the "argument between a Christian and an Infidel" already quoted, the former is made to say that "God is a self-creative power, existing from all eternity;" and is thus answered by the Atheist: "By admitting a self-creative power, do you not expose the uselessness of Deity? Can there be any need of a mechanic who, before he makes his work, has to make himself?" Now this is not the language of Theism. It is responsible for no such palpable folly. *Self-existent* is its term to express the necessity of the mind for something different from the series of finite causes and effects, to rest upon as the ultimate Cause. "Self-caused infinite phenomena," is the new phraseology of Atheism; "Self-existent Mind," is the phrase of Theism. Self-existent, the Atheist cannot find fault with, for he believes it of eternal matter. But "self-caused" is self-contradictory and absurd, because it means existing and not existing at once; not yet caused, and therefore still to be done,—yet causing, and therefore existing all the while! He who can talk of self-causation seriously, need charge no one else with credulity at any rate. So much for Atheistic axioms and postulates. Let us return to the examination of the theory proposed for our acceptance.

"Human faculty is inadequate," says the *Reasoner*, "to the comprehension of the universe, and precisely on this account we cannot reasonably fall in with the opinion that it had a cause." Is this a rational conclusion from the premises? Do we conclude thus in our progressive and ever-extending inquiries into causation? Do we admit that there are causes for those things only which we thoroughly comprehend; and, as soon as something passes our comprehension, deny that it needs, or that it

has, a cause? There are few subjects in art or science, perhaps there is not one, that we can say we do thoroughly comprehend. Has such and such a phenomenon a cause so far as our knowledge goes, and no cause where our knowledge is at fault? Do we believe that those which we understand, as we think, thoroughly, have causes, and that those which perplex us are uncaused or self-caused? Did the astronomer when he had learned to believe in celestial gravitation as the cause of the understood motions of the solar system, and began to observe with surprise certain perturbations in the planetary orbits, conclude that those perturbations needed no cause to account for them, because they were so perplexing? No, truly! He took for granted that there must be a cause, and was not satisfied till he found it in the attraction of a more distant planet hitherto undiscovered. So, when the geologist of some years past, understanding (as he thought he did) the structure of the earth according to the earlier diluvial theory, found stratifications and deposites which this theory would not explain,—did he forthwith conclude that the phenomena which he could not comprehend needed no cause to account for them, precisely because they were incomprehensible to him? O, no! He assumed the very reverse. He took for granted that they must have had a cause, and presently gave up his narrow diluvial theory for a wider and more comprehensive one. He did not act upon the principle of philosophizing here laid down, that human faculties, when inadequate to comprehend certain phenomena, might, for that reason, fairly conclude that such phenomena had no cause, or were self-caused, though the same faculties were bound to infer a cause for all such phenomena as they can comprehend! From such a canon it would follow that causes start into existence as human knowledge investigates effects. It would follow that the same phenomenon is caused and uncaused, if contemplated by a philosopher and by a peasant, the one comprehending it and the other not!

The theory proceeds: "Our knowledge of causes rests upon our observation of finite phenomena. Infinite phenomena may have been self-caused." Before we can flatter ourselves that a clear meaning (whether a true or a false one) is conveyed by these words, we must ask what is meant by *phenomena*, and what by *finite* and *infinite* as opposed to each other. These terms, indeed, seem evidently to require some uncommon meanings to be given to them, to redeem the proposition from the charge of palpable nonsense. *Phenomena* is a very common word. Literally expressing *appearances*, it is always used to denote, not the essences or causes of things, but their manifestations. It stands for things which the mind unconsciously assumes to be, and investigates as being, results or effects; and never denotes either the ascertained or the supposed causes of things, not even in the sense of mediate or instrumental causes. The phenomena of Gravitation are those

results and effects which we account for by the theory of a mysterious force called Gravitation. The phenomena of Light are results or effects, as distinguished from the essence or principle of Light, the assumed cause of the phenomena, still a matter of dispute among physical philosophers. By *phenomena*, in short, the scientific world always means the observed results or effects of causes known or unknown; they never use the word to express causes, either known or unknown. And we can make no advance in knowledge, though we may hide absurdity in seeming profundity, by misusing terms universally understood.

Then what is the meaning of this division of phenomena into *finite* and *infinite?* Are *finite* and *infinite* to be taken in their popular, or in their metaphysical, sense? In what sense are the phenomena we observe finite? Individually? or collectively? Is it meant that they are limited in number? or in their operation? Are the phenomena from which we have inferred Gravitation or Electricity finite in number? Perhaps so, though no one has kept count of them. But those open to human observation, at any rate, are, as regards number, unlimited, infinite. And so complicated is the connection of causes and effects, that no one can say where the results of any given phenomena end, or venture to call the phenomena observable by human faculties, finite in this sense. That our knowledge of causes rests upon a finite or limited observation of phenomena is very true, if that be what is intended; but this is true whether the phenomena be called finite or infinite. But, calling them finite, as we have no objection to do, we want to understand the distinction between the "finite phenomena" which it is here said we can observe and comprehend, and from our observation of which we deduce causes, and those "infinite phenomena" which (it is implied) we cannot observe, but which we may therefore rationally believe are self-caused. Do these "infinite phenomena" constitute what is elsewhere called Nature and the Universe? That seems to be what is meant. Then what are these infinite phenomena but the aggregation of those very same phenomena which are designated finite just before? Or are the finite phenomena those which we refer severally to a general law? And is that general law, and all other general laws of the universe, what is meant by the infinite phenomena which may be self-caused? If this be the hidden meaning of this mystic language (and we have earnestly sought to find its intended meaning), then we must again say, a law is not a phenomenon, nor are all the laws of nature "infinite phenomena." They are the known or believed causes of the phenomena which we may well call infinite in number and modes of operation. How to distinguish between the finite and the infinite phenomena, we are not told; nor is it easy for the mind to satisfy itself that it has taken hold of a real thought, as to the necessity of a cause for the former and the non-necessity of a cause for

the latter. For if by *finite* and *infinite* we mean respectively the few that we can observe or count and the many beyond our computation or observation, it is manifestly absurd to say that the many phenomena require no cause, though the few do. But if by finite and infinite be meant the *comparatively limited* and the *seemingly unlimited* in their connections and influences, it is equally absurd to think that the less and more limited have more need of a cause than the greater and wider, so long as they are all really *phenomena*. But *phenomena* must mean two different things in the different parts of the sentence, to make any difference in the necessity for a cause, since the difference between finite and infinite is, practically speaking, only this, that the infinite are an aggregation of the finite.

But "infinite phenomena may have been self-caused," says the theory before us. "The eternity of matter," it is added, "suggests this conclusion." We have already commented upon the postulates of self-causation and eternity of matter. How the doubtful one respecting the eternity of matter can, if admitted, suggest the impossible one of self-causation, it is not easy to see; nor is any link of connecting thought supplied by the writer. In point of fact, however, many Theists hold the eternity of matter, and argue the necessity of eternal mind operating upon it and with it to produce the phenomena observed. It is curious, however, to notice here the dogmatic absoluteness with which this principle can be assumed by an Atheist, who is offended if equal dogmatism be shewn in assuming the eternity of mind. And yet eternal mind seems quite as essential to the solution of existing phenomena as eternal matter. The Berkleyan, indeed, believing in eternal mind, can, without the admission of matter at all, solve all existing phenomena by the creation of other minds receptive of impressions which constitute, according to him, the phenomena. But the eternity of matter being granted would never, of itself, explain the origination of mind as among its "infinite phenomena."

Perhaps we seem to dwell longer on this Atheistic theory than it deserves. But not longer than it requires,—so artfully is its no-meaning veiled under the form of philosophical speculation; nor longer than its readers deserve, if any of them desire to attach definite ideas to important terms on deeply interesting subjects. But we have nearly finished our criticism.

The phrase "infinite phenomena" is presently exchanged for "infinity;" the abstract put for the concrete without the reader's permission asked or notice given to him. The *Reasoner* goes on: "If infinity" (that is, the infinite phenomena of eternal matter) "had a cause, it is no longer infinity. Or granting that it had a cause, that cause must be definite; and if definite, it had a cause too" [*definite* here plainly means the same as *finite;* but why is the word changed? and why *must* the cause of infinite

phenomena be *finite* or *definite?*]; "if indefinite" [infinite? but why change the word?], "we have only fled from one infinity to another—from the infinity of phenomena to the vaguer and unsubstantial infinity of conjecture."

Such is the most distinct announcement we can find of this so-called popular Atheism of our day and our countrymen. Anything more unexact, yet more pretending, in its phraseology, or more vague in the ideas hidden rather than expressed by it, can hardly, we think, be found. Indeed, we very much doubt whether the men who write thus ought really to be considered Atheists after all. If they could waive their love of singularity and soften the contempt which they make a parade of expressing for the superstition of weaker intellects than their own, and then distinguish carefully between questions of words and questions of essential thought, and while they deny and disprove the ignorant fallacies often connected with the belief in a God, would carefully consider what attributes they themselves ascribe to "Nature" or to "Infinite Phenomena,"—they might perhaps find out that their boasted Atheism consists merely in a name, and that the real distinction between their religious notions and those of educated and philosophical Theists marks the degradation rather than the elevation of their own.

The highly-gifted poet Shelley fancied, and tried to believe, himself an Atheist; but his works disprove his own assertions. Acutely sensitive and fervently imaginative,—alive to every impression of beauty, external, mental and moral,—warm-hearted, affectionate and benevolent,—that young enthusiast looked round upon the world and upon mankind with a heart of love for everything good and beautiful, honourable and right, and at the same time with a ready indignation against oppression and wrong, both outward and mental. The worldliness of established religious institutions disgusted him; the slavishness of religious creeds and the selfishness often disguised under religious professions, excited him to the violent expression of very crude opinions on the subject of religion while a mere boy at the University. His expulsion from Oxford for this folly did not convince his judgment nor touch his better feelings. Then the legal injustice by which, a few years afterwards, he was deprived of the guardianship of his own children on the ground of his alleged Atheism, exasperated him still more against society, and especially against religion and its professors. So, from that time, Shelley continued to pour forth the bitterness of his own wounded feelings against religion and against God, for all that men had perpetrated in religion's name against its holy spirit.

And now, what was Shelley's Atheism in point of fact? In one line of his rich, wild poetry we find him defiantly exclaiming, almost like a ribald Atheist, "There is no God!" But almost in the next line he rapturously adores the "Spirit of Nature!"

And all these expressions abound in his writings: "Spirit of Nature," "Soul of the Universe," "Universal Spirit," "All-sufficing Power," "Spirit of Activity and Life, that knows no time, cessation or decay." These expressions are the continual utterance of his heart's emotions, joined with his reason's conviction, towards a superior intelligence and love. That loving intelligence he was ready to recognize and adore under any other name except *God*, because that one name had been profaned by the crafty and degraded by the ignorant. He makes this manifest in the following express words (a strange creed for an Atheist, for it is indeed a formal avowal of belief):

> "The inexterminable Spirit it contains
> Is Nature's only God; but human pride
> Is skilful to invent most serious names
> To hide its ignorance. The name of God
> Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
> Himself the creature of his worshipers."

Shelley was an Atheist only in vaunt or caprice. In his own way he believed and worshiped; and that way was truly spiritual and devotional too. He turned away from Christianity, which he identified with the harsh law of the land. But he was a Theist of a very pure order. His poetry proves this. And here we must beg pardon of his memory for seeming to class him, even transiently, with those among whom he indeed placed himself by affecting the name of Atheist, but who, generally speaking, seem studiously to disown even the sense of natural beauty and sublimity, as too closely verging on religion for their hard-headed materialism. Witness such a communication as the following, in the *Reasoner* (No. 221, p. 240), which may be taken, we fear, as the truer general type of the spirit of this sect; while Shelley's spiritual perception of the beauty and love and majesty that are abroad in Nature's works is studiously deprecated wherever a vestige of it appears among men whom they partly claim as their own. It is in the *Reasoner's* acknowledgment of "correspondence."

"A., having recently read Mr. Barker's *People*, writes:—'Barker, in his *People*, indulges in the usual exclamations about God, when visiting Niagara. All travellers see God in this waterfall. I suppose it is on the principle that a terrible God is preferred to a mild one. It is a bit of the deluge. Roaring, foaming, stunning, enough to drive your wits away, seem to have more effect on the religious than any beautiful scene abundant in productions of nature. They prefer the destructive—a river reluctantly going along, as Barker describes it, and then, whether it will or no, sent to the bottom. Can the sense of beauty be associated with such phenomenon? It is all water, for there seems nothing contrasting with the scenery. Amidst mountains and plains, a fountain-like waterfall is an addition; a refreshing shower is more agreeable than cats and dogs; a watering-pot sprinkling its contents, than a bucket of water discharged over anything. I wish people would analyze their ideas, and not turn a monstrosity into the evidence of God.'"

But returning to the position of thoughtful and not coarse-minded men who call themselves Atheists, we venture to doubt whether they are really such. All Atheistic arguments tend rather to shew, to whatever extent their force is admitted, not that there is no Supreme Power and Intelligence, but that some particular notions which prevail respecting God are doubtful or false.

Many very rash and unjustifiable doctrines respecting the nature of God have been and are held by various classes of Theists, which, beyond all doubt, furnish the chief occasion for the arguments of Atheism. Theists have speculated, for instance, far beyond their depth, on the nature and mode of the Divine Existence, and have spoken familiarly of the "Person," "Substance" and "Procession" of Deity. They have presumed to tell just *when* and *how* He made the world *out of nothing*. Churches have put into the form of creeds many statements of questionable philosophy and some even of questionable morality. But this is only what has happened with every subject of human inquiry. The central principle is separable from the special views of the particular advocate. And it must be separated from all that are extraneous, and especially from all that are extravagant. Who shall describe the nature of God? Who define the mode of His existence? Our reasoning is legitimate while we argue from the existence of arrangements to which human wisdom and power are incompetent, that superhuman wisdom and power exist. But argument fails and rash conjecture begins, when we endeavour to define what God is, except by the attributes exhibited in His works. Of His Attributes we can speak; but not of His "Essence," or "Substance," or "Person." And so, on the other hand, the reasoning is legitimate which disputes those rash, presumptuous dogmas respecting the nature of the Great Unknown; but to argue that there is no superior Intelligence because believers in one have burlesqued the idea by impersonating or substantiating it in questionable forms, is not so clearly logical.

At various times and by different classes of men calling themselves philosophers, various phrases have been used to denote the ultimate cause of things, instead of God, the Supreme Mind and Will. Some have spoken of the "Powers of Nature," or the "Laws of Nature;" some, of the "Properties of Matter;" some, of the "Principle of Order;" some, of the "Attraction of Atoms;" some, of the "Power of Appetence;" some, of the "Nature of Things" (as some speak now of "Infinite Phenomena"), as the Ultima Thule of the reasoning process; and have endeavoured severally to account (as they have called accounting) for all that exists by the operation of these causes (so called), without admitting the existence of a superior Intelligence to impart every power, to ordain each law, communicate every property, direct each influence, and be the Cause of Nature's causes. But is not

this using words without a meaning? To talk of Nature operating by fixed and regular, wise and harmonious laws, and deny that intelligence has been concerned in ordaining those laws,—to speak of a Principle of Order as naturally pervading the universe, and say that order prevails without design, that the highest regularity is the result of chance,—to maintain that Matter possesses originally and inherently all the self-moving, self-adjusting, self-directing properties, all the order of design, all the arrangement of intelligence, all the utility of benevolent purpose, that could exist in the works of an all-wise and benevolent God,—and yet to deny that a God is,—not to perceive that Matter, if thus wise and powerful and beneficent, would itself be in effect all that can be meant by Deity,—how strange does it seem that any man whose mind has learnt to reason correctly on other subjects, should so pervert argument on this! The self-styled Atheist approaches, in fact, nearer to the Heathen, except as regards consistency. Matter is to him, or ought to be, virtually God. Nature, to him, is, according to his own showing, divine, self-existing, all-originating. If, with Shelley, he adores the "Soul of the Universe," that Soul of the Universe is the very thought of the Theist when he speaks of "God." But if he really ascribes self-existence and self-direction to the various material parts of the universe, then those parts of the universe ought, in all consistency, to be to him "Gods many and Lords many." The originating Will, whatever it be, is what alone we can mean by Deity. If the originating Will is in the material agent, then that material agent must be itself Divinity. This kind of Atheist does not then disbelieve a God, but he degrades God into a number of material objects or powers. He is the veriest heathen in the world! He must think the sun shines of itself! Is not this to deem the sun a God? And that the moon reflects the solar light through her own sweet love of beauty! Why does he not worship the golden car of Phœbus, and the silver bow of Dian, like the ancient Greek or the modern Persian? He regards the earth as the giver of the bread that feeds him. Ought he not to pay to the beneficent Earth his religious thanks? and to sacrifice to the "mighty mother" as her pious children did in ancient days? He thinks the winds possess self-moving power; and that the tides of ocean roll as ocean wills; and that the lightning directs its own course; and that the tree shoots forth its branches by its own act; and that man, like the rest, stands erect in his own self-dependence, till some stronger deity, in human or brute form, or some deity of disease, or accident, or old age, wills his extinction. And if he does not worship the bright luminary of day, and pray to the senseless earth for its daily bounty, and call for pity on the winds and waves when tossed by tempest, and build his altar on every green hill and beside each living stream,—surely it is because he is practi-

cally ashamed of his own creed, and feels that the gods whom he has theoretically taken to himself are unworthy of his confidence and insensible to his homage.

No doubt the modern Atheist would repel this charge of heathenism. He does not mean to invest every part of Nature's infinite phenomena with distinct intelligence and originative energy. He is too philosophical to admit any such idea. No! he refers everything, according to the most approved light of modern science, to the agency of *general laws*. All is the result of general and extensively prevailing principles. Very well. We stay not, just now, to ask him what Law-maker ordained those laws; what Will put in action those principles. We will suppose the laws, or principles, as he does, to be self-existent, self-enacting, self-executive. He does not then, we must grant, idolize the individual works of Nature. But he deifies its all-prevailing Laws. The Laws of Nature are expressly, according to him, the *real origin* of order, contrivance, beauty and blessing. Then he does not adore the Sun; for the sun, he knows, only obeys the supreme laws of attraction, light and heat, and (it may be) electricity. He does not worship the Earth; his philosophy forbids it; for the earth's produce, he plainly perceives, is the result of the natural operation of heat and moisture, and the absorption of particular juices and gases from the ground and the atmosphere, according to the nature of plants and trees. He does not fall on his knees to propitiate the Thunder-storm, for he knows that it obeys the laws of self-existent electricity. Now, at length, however, we seem to be arriving at a clear understanding. Attraction, Light, Heat, Electricity, Reflection, Absorption, Polarity, Oxygen, Hydrogen, and the other elementary substances,—in short, all natural bases, principles, or agents, or laws, as they are variously called, —are the *ultimate causes* to which modern Atheism (so called) refers the origination of all that exists. We must rest upon an ultimate cause or causes, known or inferred, somewhere. The laws of Nature and the elementary principles of bodies are the *ultimata* of this school of Atheism. It not only knows nothing beyond; it denies that there is, or can be, or need be, anything beyond. These then are, in fact, its divinities; for what do we mean by *divinity* except the first Cause, the originating Will? These are the divinities of the modern Atheism; just as the principle of *Order*, and the essential *Properties of matter*, and the system of *Appetences*, were the divinities (if they were not the mere verbiage) of a school now antiquated by the new nomenclature of science. The Atheist is more truly a polytheist, a very heathen. He admits a multitude of partial agents, always self-acting and causing, instead of One Supreme and all-comprehensive Soul of the Universe. And if he does not worship the law of Gravitation and the law of Cohesion, and the principles or

essences of Light, Heat, Electricity, Oxygen, Nitrogen, Carbon, Sodium, Potassium, and all the other elements and bases in turn, he is ungrateful to his gods,—he is inconsistent with his creed!

And how great and grievous the inconsistency! He sees (according to his mode of thinking) in these principles of the universe, the primary causes of all that he possesses, enjoys and suffers, and the ultimate disposers of all his future lot; yet never does he lift up to them one thought of devotion, never breathes to them one hymn of thankfulness or trust, one sigh of penitence, one wish of goodness; he never pours out to them the aspirations of confiding piety! The reason is, that, while by his theory he has endowed them with that consciousness and intelligence which must belong to them if they be primary causes, they are yet so plainly unintelligent and mechanical in all their operations, so plainly not supreme and self-acting, that the evident facts of the case practically annul his theory. Polytheist and heathen according to his principles of reasoning, he is, alas! Atheist in feeling. In his heart he feels that he has no God to trust in, though by his philosophy he has made many gods of unconscious and unintelligent things. He has too much sense, after all, to worship his own idols. Yet he does not retrace the errors of speculation by which he has deified these, to the exclusion of a higher and more comprehensive power. He lives without God in the world. He sees the loveliness of Nature round him, yet sees not in it the real indications of Divine Majesty and Love. He partakes the gifts of Providence without perceiving and acknowledging whence they flow. His joys are never lighted up with devout gratitude, nor his tears wiped away by religion's hand. The world, to him, is practically a scene of independent and conflicting powers, perpetually struggling for mastery, and unbalanced, unharmonized, by a higher and more comprehensive Will. The universe, to him, is a monstrous system of Fate, full of might but destitute of mind, ruling all things by inexorable laws, but those laws destitute of reason themselves and owning no reason above them. Life, to him, with its changing good and evil, is full, not of trial, but of trouble—not of improvement, but of imperfection; a scene of sad chances and changes, the results of stern material laws, not of legislative wisdom enacting those laws for good; to be lived, but not to be improved; to be enjoyed, but not morally prized; to be struggled through, but not sanctified; to be surrendered to fate or necessity when it can be held no longer, not relinquished with gratitude for the past and hope of a more exalted future. "They take the sun from the world who take God from human life," said an ancient heathen philosopher. Practical Atheism is life in the dark.

The Pantheistic philosophy has here its practical counterpart. Just such as we have argued to be the implied attributes of matter

according to the negative principles of English Atheism, they are avowed to be in the speculations of the Pantheist. To him, the laws, the principles, the elementary bases, all the powers and all the parts, of Nature, are avowedly not indeed gods, but God. All is God; every creature, every thing, is part of this Divine Infinitude. And therefore nothing is truly divine. Deity is lowered, frittered and vulgarized, till every stock and stone is a part of it. Such Deity, though called universal, is materialistic and unspiritual, and is in fact no Deity at all to the religious sense.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE BRITISH SCHOOLS ENTIRELY UNSECTARIAN IN 1816.

Sir,

I have before me a thick octavo volume, entitled, "Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the Education of the Lower Orders in the Metropolis, with the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee; ordered by the House of Commons to be printed. 1816." The present Lord Brougham, then Henry Brougham, Esq., M.P., was Chairman of the Committee; and among the members, the names of Sir Samuel Romilly, Thomas Babington, Joseph Butterworth, &c., are to be found. The inquiry lasted nearly a month, and a large number of witnesses—clergymen, Catholic priests, Dissenting ministers, schoolmasters and persons engaged in philanthropic labours—were examined. The evidence of managers and others connected with the British and Foreign Schools in the Metropolis, and especially of the one in the Borough Road, is particularly valuable, as shewing beyond a doubt that forty years since no departure from Joseph Lancaster's unsectarian plans of education had been made. Several of these individuals were summoned before the Committee, and those parts of their testimony which bear on the subject of religious instruction as then given in the Lancasterian or British Schools, cannot prove otherwise than valuable and interesting. I venture, therefore, to send some extracts from the book in question, which I imagine will convincingly shew that, whatever be the present practices in these seminaries, the system of scriptural instruction pursued by the excellent founder and those who co-operated with him, was of the most liberal kind; no doctrinal sentiments were allowed to be introduced; the schools were for children of *all* denominations, and the rights of conscience suffered no infringement there; and hence they met with such warm approval and such cordial support from the friends of religious liberty throughout the empire.

The late William Allen was a man well known for his great philanthropy and his admirable public spirit. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and, with many others of that body, from an early period, warmly seconded the exertions of Lancaster by his purse and his active, zealous co-operation. His evidence is full and in every point satisfactory. He gave the Committee much interesting information as to the

rise and progress of the British Schools, their extension, their modes of procedure, and their resources. Mr. Allen remarks, in the course of his testimony,—"I was particularly struck with the liberality upon which the system was conducted; for while the reading lessons consisted of extracts from the Scriptures in the very words of the Authorized Version, no peculiar catechism or creed was forced upon the children thus promiscuously gathered together, and who must obviously consist of those belonging to persons of different religious persuasions; and I could not but perceive at the same time the immense advantages which would arise to the community by thus educating children of different religious persuasions together, inasmuch as it would tend to lessen those prejudices and animosities which often have been found so mischievous to society." (Pp. 188, 189.) This refers to what he had seen in the Borough-Road School, and under the direct management of Lancaster himself. And, again, the question was put, "Suppose a National School were established at which the children of Churchmen were taught the Catechism and obliged to go to church, and the children of Dissenters not obliged to go to church, but only to attend some place of worship, and to be employed some other way while the other children were learning the Catechism, what would prevent the Dissenters from sending their children to such School?" Mr. Allen's reply was, "My opinion is that they would very generally send them. But the difficulty in supporting such a School would arise from this circumstance, that some of the subscribers would conscientiously object to the appropriation of any of the funds to the teaching any peculiar creed, from a conviction that that ought to form a part of the duty of the minister of each religious profession." (P. 286.) A paper was delivered to the Committee by this witness, entitled, "Hints for the Formation of Auxiliary Societies in aid of the British and Foreign School Societies: Rules and Regulations." The third Rule is, "That conformably to the fundamental principles of the parent Institution, the Schools to be established by this Society shall be open to the children of persons of every religious denomination. No catechism peculiar to any religious sect shall be taught in the Schools, and the general reading lessons shall consist of extracts from the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures." And the fourth, "That the parents or relations of every child admitted into the Schools of this Society shall engage that their children shall attend every Sunday at such place of religious worship as they may prefer, under the superintendence of such persons as may be appointed by the Committee." (P. 198.) A regulation from a paper presented at the same time, entitled, "School Associations," is to the same effect as regards the attendance of children at different places of worship (p. 201); and the concluding Rule is, "That no religious opinions peculiar to any sect or party be taught in the school-rooms." (P. 202.)

Mr. John Pickton, Superintendent of the establishment for training masters at the Borough-Road School, says, in reply to the question, "Are the children at the Borough Road compelled to go to church on a Sunday?" "They are obliged to attend some place of worship such as their parents prefer; but in the majority of cases they attend Sunday-schools, and follow the course respecting attending places of worship which is laid down at their respective Sunday-schools. Perhaps two-thirds attend Sunday-schools; of the remaining one-third, I should think

two-thirds attend the Established Church." Again: "Are there other Dissenters of different sects?—Yes: Jews and Catholics included." "There is no catechism taught at your School?—None, and the reading lessons used are exclusively from the Scriptures, without note or comment." "Do you give any *viva-voce* explanation of the Scriptures when they read them?—No." [This, however, seems to refer to the case of Jewish boys, as the preceding question asked related to them.] (Pp. 315, 316.) "Do you find many Dissenters so desirous of having their own peculiar tenets taught to their children, as to be unwilling to send them to such a School as you have described yours to be?" [i.e. the Borough-Road School, of which this witness was the master *pro tem.*]—"I have never observed such an unwillingness in any one instance; they never say anything about creeds; they merely wish to get their children educated." (Pp. 323, 324.)

Mr. Thomas Biggs, as Secretary to the West-London Lancasterian Association, in reply to the question, whether one of the Schools connected with that Association was "conducted on the plan of the Lancasterian or British and Foreign School Society?" says, "It is conducted upon the plan of the parent Institution, so as to admit children of all religious denominations without exception." (P. 65.) And Mr. Edward Wakefield, a member of the same Association, remarks, that his "opinion decidedly is in favour of mixing the children of the different sects, and whose parents come from different countries, and the bringing them up in terms of intimacy and affection under the roof of a common school-room." (P. 77.)

Mr. Jameson, the master of the School in the Horseferry Road, to which the observations of the two preceding witnesses mainly have reference, says, "The number admitted [into the School] since the 16th January, 1815, is 413; 359 of the Church of England, 3 Jews, 5 of the Kirk of Scotland, 7 Baptists, and 36 other Dissenters. We take in all religions; we only ask the question in order to know what religions we have; they may attend what place of worship they please. At the present moment, we have 195 of the Church of England, 3 Jews, 5 of the Kirk of Scotland, 1 Baptist, 4 Catholics, and 35 Dissenters." (P. 173.) Again: "Has any complaint been made with respect to your excluding certain books?—We never use anything but the Bible and Testament, and that is without any comment at all; the Scripture is not at all interpreted in any way." "Have the parents complained of the Scriptures not being interpreted?—I never heard of it." "Have they complained of your not using any catechism?—I never heard of it." (P. 176.)

Mr. Newman, Secretary to the Peckham Lancasterian School, remarks, in a paper sent by him to the Committee,—"The children [of the School] attend the various places of worship in the village on Sundays, according to the religion of their parents; and it is cause of much satisfaction to the supporters of this School that the good effects of its establishment are visible in the more quiet and orderly observance of the Sabbath, it having been remarked by many of the inhabitants that the village is not disturbed on Sundays, as it was formerly, by the children playing about in a noisy and disorderly manner." (P. 480.)

Mr. Francis Place says that he thinks he understands the Lancasterian mode of teaching completely, and, as far as he has observed it, is, he thinks, superior to the National mode. Being asked, "Is any creed en-

joined in the Lancasterian Schools?" he replies, "None, nor any particular form of prayer." (Pp. 475, 476.)

Comment on these extracts is quite unnecessary. They speak for themselves, and abundantly prove, if such proof be now needed, that the original system of religious instruction in the British Schools was entirely unsectarian. Lancaster's idea was, as is well known, "Schools for all, and with no distinction of creed." To promote Schools on this principle was the leading purpose of his life. His School in the Borough Road was, as remarks Mr. Allen, "an institution pregnant with the greatest benefit, not only to this country, but to the whole world." He mentions the interview between George the Third and Lancaster, when the King expressed high approbation of the whole plan and the broad principle on which it was founded, and became, with the Queen, a munificent subscriber to the funds. The Duke of Kent, father of our present beloved Sovereign, and his brother, the Duke of Sussex, soon after enrolled themselves as warm and active supporters of the institution, together with the liberal section of both Houses of Parliament. These illustrious individuals did not, we are assured, give their sanction to a narrow, exclusive system. They knew and they admired the comprehensive views of Lancaster, and they exerted themselves to carry them out in their fullest extent. Many of your readers can recollect those free and happy times, and must long earnestly for their return. Return they will, if there be but unity and perseverance among the friends of Education in its unrestricted and only true sense. The cause is worth the most determined effort, and that effort must be successful if they do not forget the motto of excellent Joseph Lancaster himself, uttered and acted on by him again and again—"Try."

Nantwich. Thomas Bowring.

CHURCH AND DISSENTING SCHOOLS.

The Census seems to shew that a large proportion of the children of Dissenters receive whatever education they are fortunate enough to get, in Church schools. This remark applies, however, only to day schools. As it regards Sunday schools the case is reversed. The Dissenting bodies have many more* children in their Sunday schools than the Church has, so that the greater proportion of the children of the poor go to the Church day school and to the Dissenting Sunday school. What a poor ignorant child retains of the religious instruction it receives at school is not, probably, the *sectarian* part of it. If the Dissenters have reason to complain that their children are taught Church principles in the week-day school, they have, at any rate, the opportunity of unteaching them in the Sunday school. The real reason of the success of Dissenting Sunday schools as compared with those of the Church lies in the fact that the organisation of Dissenting bodies is better adapted to *lay agency*, which is the life of the Sunday school, than that of the Church is.—*Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1855.

* The total number of Sunday-school children is 2,369,039, of which only 935,892 attend Church Sunday schools.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

Glaucus; or, the Wonders of the Shore. By Charles Kingsley. 12mo. Pp. 165. Cambridge—Macmillan. 1855.

In this little book Mr. Kingsley's genius comes out in a new character, as if, like his mythological prototype, he had eaten of some magic grass and been suddenly turned into a denizen of the sea. The substance of it originally appeared as a brilliant and lively article in the North British Review, and it must be regarded as an attempt to interest listless idlers in marine zoology rather than as a systematic treatise for scientific students, to which latter character it makes no pretensions; much of the information conveyed, moreover, being extracted from the pages of Mr. Gosse and Dr. Harvey, to whom and other writers the author gratefully expresses his obligations and carefully refers his readers. Mr. Kingsley certainly presents the pursuit which he advocates in a most graphic and attractive manner, and intersperses the facts which he brings forward with many striking and beautiful thoughts. His eloquence perhaps sometimes verges on rhodomontade, and his liveliness sometimes seems rather forced (like that of some of the scientific papers in Household Words), implying a suspicion that his readers must be coaxed to study physics, as children to swallow *physic*, by the help of a little sugar. His religious reflections, however, are, upon the whole, more gracefully and appropriately introduced, we think, than those of "that most pious naturalist, Mr. Gosse," who, with the determined energy of a practised dredger, sometimes seems to haul them in. There is much that is deeply interesting and well put in the introductory remarks on the study of Nature in that profound and comprehensive spirit by which geology has been distinguished, especially as illustrated by the investigation of the origin of a tarn under the summit of Snowdon, with its evidences of glacial action. The following passage also contains an appropriate thought, which we remember as having been long ago expressed by Miss Harriet Martineau in her essay on the Lake District:

"There is a mysterious delight in the discovery of a new species, akin to that of seeing for the first time in their native haunts, plants or animals of which one has till then only read. Some, surely, who read these pages, have experienced that latter delight; and, though they might find it hard to define whence the pleasure arose, know well that it was a solid pleasure, the memory of which they would not give up for hard cash. Some, surely, can recollect at their first sight of the Alpine Soldanella, the Rhododendron, or the black Orchis, growing upon the edge of the eternal snow, a thrill of emotion, not unmixed with awe; a sense that they were, as it were, brought face to face with the creatures of another world; that nature was independent of them, not merely they of her; that trees were not merely made to build their houses, or herbs to feed their cattle; as they looked on those wild gardens amid the wreaths of the untrodden snow, which had lifted their gay flowers to the sun year after year since the foundation of the world, taking no heed of man, and all the coil which he keeps in the valleys far below. * * * But what is even this to the delight of finding a new species?—of rescuing (as it seems to you) one more thought of the divine mind from the realms of the unknown, unclassified, uncomprehended? As it seems to you: though in reality it only seems so, in a world wherein not a sparrow falls to the ground unnoticed by our Father who is in heaven.

"The truth is, the pleasure of finding new species is too great; it is morally

dangerous; for it brings with it the temptation to look on the thing found as your own possession, all but your own creation; to pride yourself on it, as if God had not known it for ages since; even to squabble jealously for the right of having it named after you, and of being recorded in the Transactions of I-know-not-what Society as its first discoverer—as if all the angels in heaven had not been admiring it, long before you were born or thought of."—Pp. 25—28.

The intensity of delight alluded to in the latter portion of the above extract, can be appreciated, we suppose, only by those who have experienced it. We have heard of a botanist who was suddenly cured of a violent toothache by the discovery of a new plant, in which instance the study of Natural History had a practical utility which it is impossible to question. For ourselves, however, we are so deeply impressed with the infinite productiveness of Nature, that we feel (ignorantly perhaps) sceptical as to the possibility of really exhausting any department of her works; and the accidental discovery of a variety that did not happen to have been "classified" before, would not, we fear, overwhelm us with astonishment or delight, much less cure us of any positive pain. It seems to us, moreover, to give a narrow and technical character to the contemplation of Nature, to represent its interest as consisting mainly in the discovery of something new. When Nature's wonders have been "classified," and specimens duly arranged in a museum, are they to be henceforth shelved and set aside? The poetic, artistic and devout mind surely derives unfailing and increasing pleasure of the highest kind in the contemplation of the *familiar* objects of Nature. And here we have a little fault to find with Mr. Kingsley, not in himself, but in his special pleading. He himself obviously looks at all things with the eye of a poet, a philosopher and a Christian; but he seems to us a little one-sided and exclusive in his advocacy of the particular study of marine zoology. His book opens with a highly-drawn picture of the "ignoble army of idlers" at a watering-place, whose usual resources for occupation he characterizes as "a lounge in the club-room, a stare out of the window with the telescope, an attempt to take a bad sketch, a walk up one parade and down another, interminable reading of the silliest of novels, * * a purposeless fine-weather sail in a yacht"—and so on. That there is too much truth in this picture, as a statement of what ordinarily takes place, it is impossible to deny; but why need it be "a *bad* sketch"? Why must the novels be the *silliest*"? We have no doubt that the circulating library contains, for example, Alton Locke, Hypatia and Westward Ho! Does Mr. Kingsley mean to kick down the ladder by which he himself has risen? Are human interests and emotions, questions of social order and well-being, the study of man (God's noblest work), individually or collectively, to be set aside as of no importance in comparison with zoophytes and shells? Moreover, why may not the frequenters of a watering-place obtain healthy and refined pleasure by rambling in search of the picturesque on sea or shore, and contemplating with poetic and devout delight the surface of Nature, even though they do not grope and ferret among her secret depths? To disparage all this, and to concentrate our whole attention on poking and prying for something new, is much as if we were to refuse to take pleasure in the human face divine in its warm life and beauty, and to seek delight only in dissecting the nerves and muscles laid bare when the cuticle is removed from the corpse. Mr. Kingsley thus disparages a walk in the country:

"'Taking a walk'—as one would take a pill or a draught—seems likely soon to become the only form of out-door existence possible for us of the British Isles. But a walk without an object, unless in the most lovely and novel of scenery, is a poor exercise; and as a recreation, utterly nil. We never knew two young lads go out for a 'constitutional,' who did not, if they were commonplace youths, gossip the whole way about things better left unspoken; or, if they were clever ones, fall on arguing and brainsbeating on politics or metaphysics from the moment they left the door, and return with their wits even more heated and tired than when they set out."—P. 48.

We cannot help contrasting with the above passage a few simple words from the manuscript papers of one, now no more on earth, who constantly found in that despised resource a refined and holy joy:

"Among innumerable reasons for thankfulness to the Disposer of my lot, I do not reckon it the least, that from the earliest period to which I can send back my recollection, I have been accustomed to find great pleasure in a country walk. I know no amusement, no relaxation, which, for its power of refreshing and inspiriting the mind, I should prefer to this, or even put into comparison with it. I know none which I could consent to accept as a permanent substitute for it. I hear of none among the amusements of those who have every pleasure at their command which wealth can purchase, that for a moment makes me covet their resources for spending an hour of leisure. Let me but be passing that hour with God's bright heaven above me, and his beautiful earth around me, catching at every glance some hint of his power and presence, and hearing, in every whisper of the passing breeze, or song of the merry bird, or hum of the sportive insect, the grateful music of his praise—and I feel that among the greatest and wealthiest of this world, there is no one really richer in the means of unbending and refreshing his mind."

We are far, however, from questioning the truth or the significance of such experience as Mr. Kingsley describes in the following passage:

"I may seem to exaggerate the advantages of such studies; but the question after all is one of experience; and I have had experience enough and to spare that what I say is true. I have seen the young man of fierce passions and uncontrollable daring, expend healthily that energy which threatened daily to plunge him into recklessness, if not into sin, upon hunting out and collecting, through rock and bog, snow and tempest, every bird and egg of the neighbouring forest. I have seen the cultivated man, craving for travel and for success in life, pent up in the drudgery of London work, and yet keeping his spirit calm, and perhaps his morals all the more righteous, by spending over his microscope evenings which would too probably have gradually been wasted at the theatre. I have seen the young London beauty, amid all the excitement and temptation of luxury and flattery, with her heart pure and her mind occupied in a boudoir full of shells and fossils, flowers and sea-weeds, and keeping herself unspotted from the world, by considering the lilies of the field, how they grow."—Pp. 49, 50.

The influences of Nature, under whatever aspect she be viewed, must of course depend mainly upon the capabilities and dispositions of the individual observer. We doubt not that there are minds, devoid of the poetic or artistic sense, which may yet be capable of taking interest in dredging for zoophytes and classifying specimens. Mr. Kingsley himself, as we have said, is open to all the impressions of Nature on the soul. His beautiful descriptions of the scenery near Torquay in this very work, would alone prove this, if proof were wanting. He knows how to look at Nature in the spirit of Wordsworth, of Longfellow, or of Tennyson. But we think we have met with naturalists of a prosaic, technical, mechanical cast of mind, who estimate their specimens as a workman esti-

mates the productions of his craft, and whose minds are not expanded by that broad and deep philosophy which ennobles and sanctifies scientific investigation. It is one thing to hold up to deserved ridicule and pity the weary idlers at a watering-place, and another to prove that those same idlers could be induced to make more than a nine-days' wonder of marine zoology, if resorted to in a smattering, desultory fashion. We do not see why a mania for ferns in Ward's cases, or a mania for the "Aquarium" with its connected wonders, may not be caught up and tossed away with the same caprice as any other mania, if there be not a healthful spirit of industrious and systematic perseverance in the student.

We can only glance very briefly at the subject-matter of Mr. Kingsley's little volume. He certainly sets before his readers an interesting and amusing bill of fare. The Holothuria, with its secret of everlasting health by renewing, whenever needful, its teeth and digestive organs; the Pyrgoma, "in its infancy a free, swimming animal, hovering from place to place upon delicate ciliæ, till, having sown its wild oats, it settled down in life, built itself a good stone house, and became a landowner, or rather a *glebæ adscriptus*, for ever and a day;" the Squinado, and its efficient labours as a sanitary reformer; and the exquisite beauty of many of the creatures described,—are well calculated to attract and gratify a curious, or even an incurious eye. But the pictures are not all pleasant. For example, here is one of the lovely treasures to be obtained by turning over a heavy boulder at low water on the Paignton shore:

"You see it? That black, shiny, knotted lump among the gravel, small enough to be taken up in a dessert-spoon. Look now, as it is raised and its coils drawn out. Three feet—six—nine at least: with a capability of seemingly endless expansion; a slimy tape of living caoutchouc, some eighth of an inch in diameter, a dark chocolate-black, with paler longitudinal lines. Is it alive? It hangs helpless and motionless, a mere velvet string across the hand. Ask the neighbouring Annelids and the fry of rock fishes, or put it into a vase at home, and see. It lies motionless, trailing itself among the gravel; you cannot tell where it begins or ends; it may be a dead strip of sea-weed, *Himanthalia lorea* perhaps, or *Chorda filum;* or even a tarred string. So thinks the little fish who plays over and over it, till he touches at last what is too surely a head. In an instant a bell-shaped sucker mouth has fastened to his side. In another instant, from one lip, a concave double proboscis, just like a tapir's, has clasped him like a finger; and now begins the struggle: but in vain. He is being 'played' with such a fishing-line as the skill of a Wilson or a Stoddart never could invent; a living line, with elasticity beyond that of the most delicate fly-rod, which follows every lunge, shortening and lengthening, slipping and twining round every piece of gravel and stem of sea-weed, with a tiring drag such as no Highland wrist or step could ever bring to bear on salmon or on trout. The victim is tired now; and slowly, and yet dexterously, his blind assailant is feeling and shifting along his side, till he reaches one end of him; and then the black lips expand, and slowly and surely the curved finger begins packing him end-foremost down into the gullet, where he sinks, inch by inch, till the swelling which marks his place is lost among the coils, and he is probably macerated to a pulp long before he has reached the opposite extremity of his cave of doom. Once safe down, the black murderer slowly contracts again into a knotted heap, and lies, like a boa with a stag inside him, motionless and blest."—Pp. 104—106.

If this horrid monster is to be taken as a specimen of the much-lauded "wonders of the shore," a similar taste might be gratified by witnessing a boa itself, engulfing its helpless victims in the Zoological Gardens, or

by watching the struggles of a fly in the toils of a spider, or by "assisting" at the consummation of a poor ox in an *abattoir* at Paris. The above sample made us turn back with some amusement to the lines from Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, prefixed as a motto to Mr. Kingsley's book:

> "O happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare:
> A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware."

Mr. Kingsley indulges in some declamation against the "development theory" of the author of the Vestiges, but we do not see that that theory (however little it may be sustained by a fair induction from known facts) really militates against the belief in "a living God;" and the notorious and curious fact of abortive organs in some species, "placed there, it would seem at first sight, merely to keep up the family likeness" (says Mr. Kingsley), certainly receives from him no more probable or more dignified explanation than from the author in question, who very fairly adduces it as among the presumptive evidence in favour of his views. Mr. Kingsley, however, gives manly utterance to some sound and liberal sentiments. He deprecates the distinction often made between the God of nature and the God of grace. He eloquently rebukes the narrow conceit, in view of the prodigal variety of nature, that all things were made for man as the centre and object of their existence.

"Of all the blessings which the study of nature brings to the patient observer, let none, perhaps, be classed higher than this;—that the further he enters into those fairy gardens of life and birth, which Spenser saw and described in his great poem, the more he learns the awful and yet most comfortable truth, that they do not belong to him, but to One greater, wiser, lovelier than he; and as he stands, silent with awe, amid the pomp of nature's ever-busy rest, hears, as of old, 'the Word of the Lord God walking among the trees of the garden in the cool of the day.'"—P. 102.

This, by the way, is another consideration against the theory that it is man's proper business to be always searching into the "secret things" of God's creation. Mr. Kingsley also gives apologetic utterance to the bold thought, which we heard thrown out by Professor Huxley at the last Liverpool meeting of the British Association, that Nature in some of her forms betrays not only a sense of beauty, but also a sense of the ludicrous, in the Creative Mind. He startles us still more, however, by deducing from the apparent evidences of successive acts of thought and will in the Creative Mind, an argument in favour of that Mind having become *Incarnate*. Surely he who thus strives to bolster up the popular theology, has no right to rebuke the author of the Vestiges for hasty and inconsequential reasoning. He elsewhere denounces the now obsolete attempts to put forced interpretations upon the language of Scripture and of Nature, in order to produce a false and hollow semblance of mutual confirmation such as it is irrational to look for; which certainly did not prepare us for an attempt to find in Nature presumptive evidence of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation. The same theological bias, probably, prompted the unauthorized substitution of "Word" for "Voice" at the close of the preceding extract.

Mr. Kingsley gives some sensible, practical directions as to the cheap and easy construction and management of an "Aquarium;" and happily suggests how much amusement it might afford to an invalid imprisoned in a sick room,—a supplementary hint to Miss Martineau's excellent

suggestions in her "Life in the Sick Room." We should have liked to conclude our notice by presenting to our readers a beautiful passage, shewing how keenly susceptible the author is both to the old Greek poetry which science has superseded, and to the living human interest which he has associated with his pursuit. But our space warns us to forbear, and we must content ourselves with recommending our readers to procure and read through (if they have not yet done so) this charming little sea-side book. J. R.

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1. *Little Walter, or a Mother's First Lessons on Religious Subjects.*
2. *Scenes from the Life of Jesus.* Theobald. 1855.

Most of our denomination who have had much to do with the early training of children, must, like ourselves, we imagine, have felt the want of books specially adapted to their religious instruction. Even those who have had a wide range from which to make selections, must frequently have found it difficult to keep them in harmony, and form them into something like a consecutive whole; still more must this have been the case with such as had access to only a few works, and those perhaps not always the best of their kind. We hailed with satisfaction, therefore, the formation of a Society, under auspices in which we had confidence, expressly designed to meet this particular want; and we now rejoice in being able to give a hearty approval to the two works with which the proposed series begins. If the rest are executed in the same spirit and with the same success, we feel that a most essential service will be rendered to the young of our own community, and, we venture to hope, not a few beyond it.

Never does religion speak so sweetly and persuasively as when it speaks from a mother's tongue; and in "Little Walter" we have the earnest feeling of a tender mother's heart blending itself with the first principles of holy truth, in a manner which, we are sure, cannot fail to render them winning and attractive. It is difficult for the grown-up man, with his hard worldly accretions, to force himself back into the mould of childhood again; but often, while reading these simple pages, we seemed to feel as in those early days, when a soft arm was around us, and a low gentle voice (now heard but in dreams) spoke to us of Him who made all things fair; and judging from the manner in which not a few of the "Lessons" have affected ourselves, we cannot entertain a doubt of the influence which they are fitted to have upon those for whom they are particularly intended. How beautiful and touching, for instance, is the following! We scarcely know where a better illustration could be found of the way in which sad calamity may be made, as Richter has it, "a building site for a child's church."

"What we have been talking about lately has made me think of something that happened when I was a girl, about thirteen years old: that is, just as old as your sister Bertha. We lived in the town then; and my father one morning asked me to take a book back to a friend from whom he had borrowed it. It was not far—only in the next street, and I knew the way quite well, so I did not mind going alone; there were some new houses being built in our street; and a high heavy scaffolding was built up for the men to work upon. As I passed, I noticed a boy who looked younger than myself; he had charge of his little sister, and he took such kind loving care of her! The wind was blowing rather cold, and the little girl seemed starved and miserable; and as I came up I saw him take off a nice warm soft cloak that he had

on, and tenderly wrap his little sister in it; his hands moved so gently as he fastened it about her neck, and when I looked in his face I thought I never had seen any face before so loving and so kind. There were a few drops of rain beginning to fall just as I passed, and the little boy bent down to his sister, and pointed up to the clouds, and I heard him say—'See, dear Sue! God is beginning to send us down some rain; it will soon be warmer now, and the dust will not blow into your eyes!'

"Well! I went on, round the corner of the street; I left the book at the house where my father had borrowed it, and set off home again; and when I turned the corner of the street again, the scaffolding was gone! It had fallen and crushed the poor little boy to death. I did not stay to enquire, or hear anything more: I was frightened at the bustle and the crowd, and ran home to my mother as fast as I could, and told her what had happened. In the evening she took me with her to see the little boy's mother; and, as I sat in the upper room of that little cottage, beside the bed on which they had laid the little boy's body, and looked at his pale still face, I thought, 'Can this really be the same little boy that I saw this morning, walking along with his little sister, tending her, and talking to her so lovingly?' I got up and went to the bed-side, and looked at him more closely. It was the same brown hair, the same dark eyes, the same loving smile almost, and yet—there was such a difference—the eyes were open: I stooped down and looked into them, but they did not look at me—they did not see me—and his ears did not hear. I took hold of the little hand; it lay gently by his side, and it did not feel mine—his spirit was gone; it was only his body that I saw; the soul that had looked so lovingly through those eyes, and had made those lips say such kind things, and look so dear, and set those hands to work so gently a few hours before—God had taken it away! What had He done with it? Where had He taken it?—I could not see,—I did not know: but *this* I knew —that He would still take care of it, wherever it was. The soul of that little boy must have been *very* VERY dear to God, and He would surely let it be somewhere where he would watch kindly over it, and help it still to learn, and to grow more and more beautiful, more and more loving,—and more and more like Himself. By and bye his little sister Sue stole quietly up the stairs, and came and stood by me, and put her little hand into his. After a while she said, 'Why does not he speak to me? I want him so much to come and play with me.' Poor little girl! she might well want him, the kind and helpful brother! It made me sad to think how often and how long she would want him. 'He cannot speak to you,' I said softly,—'he will never speak again!' I felt sorry for her, and I took her hand, and wanted to kiss her, but she drew it sharply from me, and began to cry. 'I want him,' she said; 'why does he not come to me?' I went to my mother, to ask her to come and comfort poor Sue. She was at the other end of the room, talking with the little boy's mother, who was telling her of all her dear boy's thoughtfulness and love—so I stood and waited. By and bye I touched her hand, and pointed to the poor little girl, who was still crying by her brother's side. Then they turned and came up to the bed. His mother took little Sue into her arms. 'Poor little thing,' said she; 'she will have as great a loss of him as I have—he was so kind and tender over her.' My mother stood looking at that still, peaceful face: 'Ah, how still he lies—how peaceful and untroubled, though his poor limbs are so sadly crushed and broken—how happy to think that he feels no pain—that his spirit is gone from this poor mangled body! Yet, still, how loving and beautiful he is to look upon,' said she, as she gently parted the hair from off his forehead, and stooped down to kiss it. 'How God must love that spirit! and if He gave it so beautiful a temple to dwell in, even here, whilst it was so young and weak, and only beginning to grow in knowledge and love, what will not His love provide for it, as it lives on and on!'

"My father and mother had often told me that death was not the end,—but that evening I seemed to *know it for myself*."—Pp. 46—50.

In a work designed for instruction, some perhaps may be disposed to require a little more of system than the one before us seems, at first sight, to display; but if they examine it with attention, we think they will find that it is not really wanting in method; and, remembering that it is for the use of young children, we are of opinion that the author has judged wisely in not giving to her "Lessons" a more formal character, and we are not sure whether it might not even have been as well to have avoided the very name, as having sometimes a sound not altogether pleasant to youthful ears. The great object to be aimed at was that of awakening and drawing forth the first principles of religious belief, which cannot be more effectually done than by an appeal to the natural feelings and affections; and no one, we imagine, will deny that in this respect at least the writer of "Little Walter" has been eminently successful.

We are fully aware how undesirable it is that alterations should be made in works intended to be used in classes, as is the case with the series to which this belongs; but we think so highly of it, and consider it so well adapted to become a general favourite, that we should like to see it receive every improvement of which it is capable; and with this feeling, we would throw out one or two hints for the next edition, which, we are persuaded, will soon be required. We have not noted down the passages as we went along, but every now and then it struck us that the form of expression might be a little simplified, and Saxon words be substituted for Latin with advantage. As regards the short poems which have been wisely appended to each Lesson, we see no reason why the names of the authors should be given in some cases and omitted in others; why, for example, Mrs. Hemans's beautiful lines, at p. 52, should not have been assigned to her, or the still more beautiful ones which follow to "rare Ben Jonson." We have likewise noticed alterations here and there, which are certainly not improvements; as when, for instance, "measure" is put for "measures" in the piece last referred to, and "shutter" for "shutters" in Tennyson's "Deserted House," at p. 54. But, reserving our most weighty objection to the last, while we admit that the poetry is often well chosen and adapted to the prose which it follows, we are at the same time constrained to say, that in many cases it seems to us utterly unworthy of it. We may, perhaps, be disposed to set our standard somewhat high, but we think we can scarcely be over-fastidious in taking exception to such rhymes as "sphere" and "there" (p. 55), "star" and "prayer" (p. 248), "flies" and "messages," "full" and "soul" (p. 101), "reach" and "stretch," "sun" and "throne" (p. 107); to the recurrence twice in the same piece of such an imperfect one as "art" and "heart" (p. 136); to such a solecism as

> "Blessings on the heart that ne'er
> Gave one pain to *whomso'er!*" (p. 52);

or to such prosaic lines as the following:

> "Oh! when without reserve 'tis given,
> Freely surrendered every part" (p. 137);
> "To such inadequate supports as these" (p. 250).

Of the poem, if so we may call it, from which this last specimen is taken, and which, in the space of three stanzas, has, besides the miserable line just given, such a rhyme as "these" and "peace," and such a violent change of versification as occurs in the third stanza, we can only say, "O, reform it altogether."

We know from experience that it is not always easy to meet with good verses every way adapted to a particular subject; but by keeping the object in view and calling in the help of friends, we feel no doubt that the writer will be able to improve her little volume in this respect, and render it still more deserving of recommendation.

We must now turn from this to the other which stands at the head of our notice; and though we have not had time to go through it with the same care, we have no hesitation in saying that it appears to us a companion worthy to stand by the side of the first. Like that, it has evidently been a labour of love; and though it can scarcely be considered (as the author says) "a child's book," there is a warmth and freshness of feeling pervading it well fitted to engage the attention and win the sympathy of young minds and hearts. To many readers, the New Testament is undeniably a dull and tedious book, which they take up only as a sort of duty work, and are glad soon to lay down again. With some, this arises, we have no doubt, from its being converted, as it so often is, into a mere dry lesson-book, and associated with hardship and difficulty, and, not unlikely, with blows and tears. Many, too, beginning as children, get into the way of reading without impression, for want of the knowledge which would enable them to throw themselves freely into the scenes described, and surround themselves with the little concomitant circumstances which tend so much to heighten the interest and give them reality; and others, of feeble and sluggish imagination, require, as it were, a helping hand to draw aside the veil which keeps them from looking into the past, and having their feelings moved as they must be if they are to derive any benefit from it. In these respects, we conceive that the "Scenes from the Life of Jesus" are calculated to be of important service. They may do something towards rescuing the sacred records from what the author (in our opinion, not too strongly) terms "the *profane* usage they often meet with;" they blend with the descriptions given a clear knowledge of Eastern habits and customs, and of the persons and places referred to, in a manner which generally well illustrates, without overburdening and retarding the story; and throughout they are presented with a force of imagination that can hardly fail to stir the most languid to attention, and which in our own case, familiar with them as we fancied ourselves to be, has served to render some of them more distinct and vivid than they were before. As an example of the picturesque style of narration, a short passage may be given from the chapter entitled "By the Quiet Waters of Galilee:"

"It happened that one afternoon he was thus preaching to a very numerous audience on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, in the immediate neighbourhood of Capernaum. The crowd was very large, and pressed upon him inconveniently, and as there were more present than he could well address from the low level of the shore on which they were all standing, he stepped into a large fishing-boat that lay hauled up on the beach, and calling to the owner, Simon Peter, who was mending his net on the shore near them, he asked him if he would be kind enough to push out his boat a little way into the deep water, that he might address the people more conveniently both for himself and them. Simon immediately left his occupation, and came and did as he was requested; and then remaining in the boat, and leaning against the weather-beaten mast, he too disposed himself to listen to the words of Jesus. The latter then sat down upon the bow of the vessel, and continued his discourse to the people. It was a curious and interesting sight to look upon this primitive congrega-

tion. Most of the hearers were lining the shore, and pressing close to the water's edge. Some were standing in the water itself. Some crowded upon the little pier that jutted out into the lake, and others jumped into two boats that were lying near, and standing or sitting on the gunwale and the bowsprit, or wherever they could find a footing, listened earnestly to the new and wonderful doctrines that Jesus taught. It was a very striking scene. Though so many human beings were standing there, grouped and crowded together, each having his individual will, and voice, and power of movement, yet everything was as still as the sky and the rocks around them. No sound was heard but the gentle rippling of the water upon the sand and against the sides of the fishing-boats, and the deep, calm, sweet voice of Jesus, falling on the ear of his listeners, as he spoke of life, and death, and holiness, and eternity, and heaven. Well might they listen! What words were these that now fell upon their ear! What deep, high thoughts were awakened in their minds—what remembrances of their past sins—what desires and resolutions of a better life—what hopes of the coming future—what visions of a life that was to be eternal!"—Pp. 108, 109.

In turning over the pages, many passages meet our eye which we should like to quote for their beauty of thought and feeling; but we must be content with a single short one from the remarks on our Lord's prayer at "the Last Supper."

"If there was anything that could still farther hallow and sublime such communion, it was the near presence of Death. Face to face he stood there, and Jesus saw and looked upon him; and though he came not into this presence as the King of Terrors, he came even here as a solemn and awful messenger, and cast his grave though softened shadow over this parting scene.

"And to that God, to that Father, we, too, can pray; and He will listen with a Father's love to our broken, childish prayer. Oh may He so help us, so lift us towards Himself, so open our hearts to the sunshine of His love, that when we too stand in the awful presence of His messenger, we may pray in the same spirit, in the same faith, in the same calm, peaceful, trustful love which breathed in the parting prayer of our Divine Master!"—Pp. 239, 240.

For the same reason as we have stated in regard to the former volume, we would just notice, before we conclude, one or two things that have struck us in a hasty perusal of this, and which may be worth consideration when another edition is called for. To begin with minor matters, we think it would be useful to have an Index of Chapters; and that a short note of explanation, similar to some already given, might occasionally be added with advantage; as, for example, on the word Pentecost (p. 76), and the identity of meaning between the names "Cephas" and "Peter" (p. 51). It is, of course, a mere matter of feeling, but there is something which grates harshly on ours in the almost jaunty air with which, in one or two instances, our Lord is made to exercise the wondrous and awe-inspiring power committed to him by God: "'Now, my son,' said Jesus, in a tone of kind, hearty, brisk command" (p. 81); "'Now, my son,' said he, in a tone of brisk, hearty, cheerful command" (p. 143); and we a little object to putting words into his mouth that are not drawn from the gospel narratives, as "my son" in these cases, and "my children" at p. 280. The error may be in us, but we have no recollection of any passage in which our Lord "gathers an illustration," as intimated at p. 71, "from the shadow of a great rock." There is undoubtedly much that is very beautiful in the description, given in the third chapter, of the process by which the character of Jesus is supposed to have been formed, but some of the details

(especially in pp. 24 and 25) are not altogether to our taste, and we are inclined to think that they had better have been left in the silence which the evangelists have preserved; while, as seeming to imply blame, we decidedly object to the expression, "which they have *neglected* to describe" (p. 26). The style of the work is, on the whole, clear, forcible and graphic; but here and there we have noticed trifling inelegances, which might as well be avoided: take, for example, "the steep *ascent* by which Jesus *ascended*" (p. 130); or, "Jesus heard *all* this, and not being *at all* willing *at* present" (p. 163). "*Was* placed the seats" (p. 103), is, we presume, only an oversight. In a few instances, the desire to be impressive seems to us to have induced a slight degree of wordiness—a little of that "overdoing" which good Richard Baxter tells us "is worse than an underdoing." Among the "scenes in the life of Jesus," we cannot but regard the raising of Lazarus from the dead as one too striking and important in itself to be omitted, and the references which are made to it by the author appear to require its introduction.

Most of these, however, are such small matters, that we should scarcely have deemed it necessary to draw attention to them, but for the value we set on these little books, and the desire we feel to see them free from spot or blemish; and, strongly recommending them to the notice of our readers, we sincerely hope that the present edition will speedily make way for another, and that they will soon attain the wide circulation which they deserve.

George Jacob Holyoake and Modern Atheism. A Biographical and Critical Essay. By Sophia Dobson Collet. Pp. 53. Trübner. 1855.

Was there ever a deliberately convinced Atheist? We doubt it much. There are Atheistical lives, and Atheistical speculations. But Atheistic *convictions* are indeed very rare. That George Jacob Holyoake is not, in any true sense of language, an Atheist, has been long evident to even the casual reader of his writings. This biography proves it decisively, and shews the successive phases of that which he is now pleased to call Secularism, and to let his coarser associates still regard as Atheism. Brought up in rigid, gloomy Calvinism, his poverty-stricken home the scene of a distraint for church dues, he indemnified himself against society by becoming a Socialist at twenty-two, and an avowed Atheist at twenty-four years of age. The latter step was the immediate consequence of the prosecution of his friend Southwell, that event becoming (in his own words) "the cradle of his doubts and the grave of his religion." This fact explains all the logical inconsistencies in his subsequent treatment of the Atheistic controversy. It was not conviction, but rebellion, that bade him write himself Atheist. So he was logically weak and inconsistent at every turn of his argument. Not only did his own concessions continually leave room for the Theist's argument, but (his own nature being intrinsically susceptible) he again and again, and with increasing frequency, admitted the *possibility* of a Divine First Cause and of a life to come, while attempting to stand on the secular and material life as the only reliable ground of action. Miss Collet makes this abundantly plain from his own writings, and claims him as virtually one of those Theists (herself included) who would exactly describe themselves as "*Pantheistic Spiritualists*"! That he is not an Atheist except in name

and associations, and (most important of all) in his influence upon minds less subtle and feelings less sensitive than his own, yet irritated like his own by political or class heart-burnings, is perfectly clear. But, without professing to appreciate the religious graduation in which a "Pantheistic Spiritualist" may stand, or endeavouring, with Miss Collet, to make out any distinct religious creed for this pseudo-Atheist, we think she has passed too lightly (and especially on her view of Mr. H.'s Theism) over this serious question in honour and morals: Is a man justified, on the grounds either of "pure moralism" (that favourite vaunt of the *secular* Mr. Holyoake), or of "Pantheistic Spiritualism" (the phrase of his sympathizing female biographer),—is he justified in making a livelihood out of his virtually discarded Atheism? How is such a position to be distinguished above that which is the occasional reproach of worldly churches and the stock argument of Atheism and Secularism, that of a sceptical Church dignitary? We see the resemblance; scarcely the distinction.

The writer of the series of articles on "Secular Atheism" wishes us to acknowledge the receipt of two pamphlets bearing on the subject from Miss Collet, sent to him through the Editor of the C. R.; a letter to whom from the same lady he has also been allowed to see. This letter politely corrects a "singular mistake" made by him in his first article (Oct. No. p. 601), where he supposed Mr. Holyoake's phrase, "Philosophic Type of Religion," to be descriptive of *his own* views, whereas it is really his description of *Mr. Newman's views.* The writer was led into this mistake by taking his quotation (about "pure moralism") from the *Reasoner*, where the title of Mr. H.'s book was cited *short.* Its full title is, "The Philosophic Type of Religion as developed by Prof. Newman, stated, examined and answered, by G. J. Holyoake." The writer erroneously supposed *Mr. H.'s "Philosophic Type of Religion," &c.* (which he had not then seen), to be a phrase descriptive of Mr. H.'s own position. He is sorry for the mistake; but is glad to feel he has done Mr. H. no injustice by it, as both Miss Collet's letter to the Editor and her Essay on Holyoake (now presented to the writer) are devoted to proving that he is not an Atheist except in name, and that he really has a religion of his own. The writer has nothing else to explain or retract, as Miss Collet (whose acquaintance with Mr. Holyoake's numerous and confessedly most inconsistent writings is much fuller than his) only objects to what he has written respecting some of them, on the plea that Mr. Holyoake himself has in other places taken different, and inconsistent, and often higher ground. To all this the writer fully and gladly assents. "The Philosophic Type," &c., adopts approvingly a large part of Mr. Newman's *Soul* philosophy, while rejecting his philosophy of a *Higher Cause.* The fact seems to be, that Mr. Holyoake is in a wrong position among correspondents and supporters of what the last numbers of the *Reasoner* seen by the present writer justify him in calling a coarse and ribald Atheism, with which Mr. H. has little personal sympathy.

Religious Liberty Bill—Lord Brougham's Speech in the House of Lords, Friday, July 27, 1855. *With the Bill, Schedules and Notes.* 8vo. Pp. 46. London—Ridgway. 1855.

This is the last, but not the least important, of the long-continued services in the cause of religious liberty rendered by Henry Lord Brougham. The Bill laid on the table of the Lords for their early consideration, and ultimately, we hope, to pass both Houses of Parliament, proposes to repeal about 120 Laws which now encumber and disfigure the Statute-book, and are at variance with the principles of religious liberty now happily recognized in this country. Lord Brougham acknowledges in the preparation of the Bill the valuable services of Mr. E. W. Field and his brother, Mr. Field, of the Chancery bar. "Of their merits," he remarks, "it is difficult for me to speak too highly."

The Acts proposed to be repealed reflect a curious and painful light on the past history of our country. How little are people aware that the Act which transferred the Supremacy from the Pope to Henry VIII. is still the law of the land; as also is an Act passed in the same evil reign excepting Anabaptists from the benefits of the King's pardon. Of the statutes passed in the reign of Charles II., many remain unrepealed which not the highest Tory or Churchman in the land would attempt, and which very few would now wish, to enforce: such is an Act against the freedom of the press, and another against conventicles.

Amongst the 120 Acts placed in the schedule of this important and admirable Bill, are those sanctioning the services in the Church of England on the 29th of May and the 5th of November, and also the famous 9 and 10 of William and Mary, directed against the deniers of the Trinity.

The speech with which Lord Brougham introduced this Bill is clear, high-toned and powerful, and in every respect worthy of a British statesman. Seldom has the principle of religious liberty been more broadly stated than in these opening remarks:

"I will not now, any more than on our recent discussions, and for the reasons I then gave, consent to use the phrase Toleration, except only as denoting the contrary of Intolerance, which, unhappily, has too often had a real existence. I object altogether to speaking of that, the existence of which I deny, the favour, or boon, or privilege of toleration; as if those who conscientiously differ with us in religious belief or observance were to thank us for allowing them, suffering them, bearing with them—any more than we have to thank them for bearing with us while we hold our opinions and exercise our worship. To hold opinions and to worship God according to his conscience is the absolute, imprescriptible right of every man; as much at the least in this most important matter as it is in trifling things his right to do what he pleases, so he breaks no law and invades no right—as much his right as to leave his dwelling and walk upon the side of the street which he prefers; and if you tell him you suffer him to do so, that you tolerate him in doing so, he may well answer that he owes you no thanks for letting him do what you have not the shadow of a right to prevent; and he may say, 'In return for your letting me walk on the left hand side of the way, I will tolerate you in walking on the right hand.' At the bottom of all this, there lurks the notion that they who pretend to tolerate are entitled, if they please, to prohibit; that they might withhold the leave they grant; in other words, that they might require conformity to their opinions on pain of temporal penalty; so that really this pretence of toleration is at the very foundation of the code of persecution."—Pp. 3, 4.

When speaking of the wrongs of Protestant Dissenters, Lord Brougham specifies the law enforcing the registration of their chapels, before they can be relieved from the penalties enacted by the Conventicle Act of Charles II. He adduces a noted case.

"But I pray you to look back upon what injustice the Registration Law worked some years ago, when those disgraceful riots took place at Birmingham, from the fanatical zeal of a mob countenanced if not instigated by persons in a respectable station, whose ecclesiastical bigotry and intolerance was exacerbated by the prejudices of a political party—when the meeting-house of Dr. Priestley was destroyed, and the house with the library and the manuscripts of that illustrious philosopher, and the apparatus with which he had made the discoveries that have given him an imperishable renown. For his private losses he obtained compensation by his action against the Hundred; but for the injuries to the chapel no action could be maintained, because the registration had not taken place. Indeed, as it was an Unitarian meeting-house, it was not within the statute of William III., the act of 1813 having, for the first time, extended the protection to such buildings. However, even after that latter Act had passed, a defective registration would have deprived the proprietors of their recourse against the Hundred, and would have enabled the rioters to escape the penalty of the law. By the Riot Act (1 Geo. 1. st. 2, c. 5) the demolition of a chapel is a capital offence, but only of a chapel duly registered. To destroy any other, any one for instance of the thousands unduly registered since 1852, though a crime of just as deep a die as makes the offence punishable with death if committed against a registered meeting-house, is only a trespass, or, at most, under the recent acts, punishable as a misdemeanor by a small fine."—Pp. 11, 12.

It is satisfactory, as an omen of the future passing of the Bill, that Lord Lyndhurst gives his cordial approbation to the preamble, which sets forth the true principle of the Penal Law repeal, and wishes that not a word in it may be altered.

A History of the Dissenters' Marriage Bill of 1855, &c. By Hull Terrell, Parliamentary Agent.

The Bill for amending the Marriage Act of Dissenters, under the charge of Mr. Cheetham in the Commons, was stranded at the close of the session in the House of Lords. This pamphlet gives an account of the Bill and its fate. It seems that in its course through the Commons, Mr. Henley engrafted upon one of its sections a clause giving power to a clergyman of the Church of England to put a veto on any application to solemnize a marriage in church or (church) chapel, after the certificate of the superintendent registrar had been legally obtained. The law as it now stands declares his certificate to have the force and effect of banns. The Bill as it stood would have destroyed the religious equality existing, and would have put before weak and bigoted clergymen a sore temptation to use their power offensively. It is to the honour of the Lord Chancellor that he refused to adopt a Bill containing such a clause. Lord Brougham was absent. There was no time, so advanced was the session, for referring the Bill back with amendments to the Commons, and so it was pushed aside. It will, we trust, with other important measures affecting religious liberty, be brought forward in good time next session, and be carried through. Mr. Terrell pays a handsome compliment to Lord Palmerston, and says, "More steps have been taken in favour of religious liberty during the few months of Lord Palmerston's Govern-

ment, than in any previous session of Parliament." Amongst the gains to religious liberty of the session, Mr. Terrell names the "Places of Worship Registration Act," which gives validity to doubtful registrations, provides for the publication of the statistics of Dissenting places of worship, exempts them from the operation of the "Charitable Trusts Act," enacts a cheap and easy mode of securing such places from disturbance, and removes doubts as to the validity of marriages which had been solemnized in licensed but uncertified places of worship.

Protestant Persecutions in Switzerland and Germany. By the Rev. T. R. Brooke, B.A., and Rev. Edward Steane, D.D.

This pamphlet contains the results of an investigation into cases of Protestant persecution on the continent, undertaken at the instance of a Committee appointed to vindicate and promote religious liberty. The English parties moving in this praiseworthy object are Lord Shaftesbury, Sir Culling Eardley, and others of the "Evangelical" school. The cases of persecution detailed refer to the states of Zurich, Saxe Meinengen, Hesse Cassel, Mecklenburg Schwerin, and Schaumburg Lippe, Bavaria, and the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. As of old in early English history, the Baptists appear to be the special objects of persecution in Switzerland and Germany. We do not doubt that good will result from the inquiries of this Committee and their manful denunciation of the persecutions they discovered. Happily, cowardice is often the attendant of bigotry; and when the latter knows that the public eye is on it, it dares not strike those it most dislikes.

We observe with more regret than surprise that this Committee have shewn their own imperfect conceptions of religious liberty by limiting their action and fellowship within the boundaries of their own ideas of "the fundamental principles of the gospel." Religious liberty includes the right, on conviction, to reject as well as receive religion. This breadth of the principle not all at present can span.

The National Review.

This Review has now issued two Nos., containing a series of articles on politics, history, literature and religion, which are, in our judgment, equal as a whole to the highest efforts of modern periodical literature. A lofty and noble tone of thought characterizes many of the articles, and their literary merit, though various, is considerable. The article in the first No. on the War is a masterly performance, from which more than one newspaper editor has, without acknowledgment, drawn his inspiration. The articles in the second No. which have chiefly attracted us, are those on the "Statesmen of the Day" and on "St. Paul." The first is executed by a master in the art of political portraiture. This must be acknowledged even by those who disapprove of the light in which he has seen fit to place some of his subjects. The article on St. Paul is occasionally clouded, and contains some views with which we cannot coincide; but it is generally able, and in parts profoundly instructive. The intimations which it gives of the outburst of free theological thought in some professedly orthodox quarters, are hopeful signs. The article on the "Early Edinburgh Reviewers," with which the second No. opens, is, spite of its injustice to Paley, clever and pleasant. The only article

in the two Nos. which we cannot praise is that on Cowper and his Poetry. It is too late in the day to ask whether Pope and Cowper are poets. The *vox populi*, which in a matter of this kind is that of truth, has long since settled that question. However briskly and smartly a writer may depreciate great poets and their works, the only thing he will prove is his own want of poetic ken.

Single Sermons.

An arrear of these publications compels us to despatch them with a brevity very disproportionate to the merits of some of them.

1. *St. Paul in Arabia*, by Rev. Edward Higginson, is a discourse preached before the Southern Unitarian Fund Society, recommending, on the authority of Paul's example, clear convictions as the only safe groundwork of manly character and public usefulness. There is so much timely truth and Christian wisdom in this discourse, that we shall take an early opportunity of recalling attention to it.

2. *What is Christianity?* by Rev. J. H. Hutton, shews briefly, but with considerable power and beauty, what there is in Unitarian Christianity to raise and inspire the heart of man. We welcome this sermon very cordially as an instructive example of the mixture of doctrinal and moral teaching, and as illustrating the practical character of Unitarian Christianity, and its adaptation to man in a sinful state.

3. *God Manifest in Christ*, by Rev. William Gaskell, preached before the Western Unitarian Society, is an exposition by the hand of a master of the true divinity of Christ; and shews how immeasurably superior, in spiritual influence as in scriptural evidence, is the Unitarian doctrine of the spiritual manifestation of God in and by Christ, to the orthodox doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. Every time Mr. Gaskell comes before the public, he proves the value of a simple, natural style, and its adequacy to the expression of profound thoughts and devotional feelings of the utmost delicacy.

4. *A Sermon on the Death of John Bishop Estlin, Esq.*, by Rev. George Armstrong, contains a just and evidently heartfelt tribute to the memory of one who adorned his Unitarian profession by a life full of good works, and by a mind attuned to devotion.

5. *The Funeral Sermon at Tenterden on occasion of the Death of Thomas Buss Shoobridge, Esq.*, by Rev. E. Talbot, well expounds the important doctrine that the faithful performance of earthly duties is so much preparation for heavenly blessedness.

6. *The New Series of Tracts issued by the Belfast Unitarian Society*, contains discourses on the Atonement, on the Concessions of Trinitarians, and on the Faith once delivered to the Saints. The last is an American reprint, from the pen of Rev. A. A. Livermore; the second is abridged from the useful volume of Mr. John Wilson; and the first is a plain refutation of the theory of vicarious satisfaction, by Rev. John Montgomery.

All the sermons we have named are desirable additions to any Unitarian catalogue. They are the productions of minds accustomed on some subjects to take rather different views of Christian truth, yet there runs through all of them a spirit of reverence for the one Master of Christians, and of charity towards differing brethren, that we notice with entire satisfaction.

A filial devout Spirit the essential Element of the Christian Character. A Sermon preached before the Unitarian Association. By G. B. Brock, of Exeter. London—Whitfield.

The merits of Mr. Brock's sermon have already been spoken of in this volume. It is thoughtful and earnest, and mingles in a very pleasing manner faith and practice. We particularly recommend it to the consideration of those who imagine that Unitarianism is a mere negation of popular beliefs. The doctrine of one God, the Father, and the practice of filial love, are the great characteristics of our religious system. These truths, Mr. Brock well observes, contain *an uniting principle* that ought to bind the sections of our body in harmonious feeling and action. It is far better for the mind to dwell on these massive and pregnant truths, rather than, as some would have us do, indulge in metaphysical speculations as to the proportion of truth which may mingle with manifest errors. Such speculations, it is pleaded, tend to foster a charitable feeling; but we apprehend that the gospel of Christ supplies us with more direct and powerful motives to Christian love than can ever spring from a bewildered intellectual vision.

Remarks on a Series of Texts on the Divinity of Christ, lately distributed by a Curate of the Established Church. Pp. 22. Manchester—Johnson and Rawson.

The author of this useful little tract is Mr. Henry Green, the Unitarian minister of Knutsford, who naturally desires that his flock and their neighbours should be acquainted with the Unitarian interpretation of texts supposed by Trinitarians to teach the Deity of Christ. It is a disadvantage to the Unitarian advocate to confine himself to ground selected by an opponent. On such ground it is not possible to bring out the whole strength of the Unitarian case. It is, however, very well to shew how feeble and inconclusive are Trinitarian arguments, and this Mr. Green has certainly done.

A Week in the Crimea, with Sketches of the Turks on the Way there and back. Liverpool—Baines. 1855.

This unpretending but interesting volume contains a series of letters, written, we believe, by Mr. P. H. Rathbone, and originally printed in the *Liverpool Times*. They contain brief but characteristic sketches, the result of independent personal observation, of Constantinople and the Bosphorus, Balaklava, Kadikoi, Inkermann, Sebastopol, and St. George's Monastery. Though penned early in the spring of the present year, they contain many details which are yet read with interest, and breathe a spirit of pure patriotism and warm regard for the progress of justice and civilization.

Amy and her Mother; or, a Picture of Life. By Edward Whitfield, Author of the Websters. London—Whitfield. 1855.

This is a very pleasing story, which we may safely recommend to the perusal of the young, and especially those in humble life. It inculcates some important lessons, such as self-denial, integrity, resignation and delicacy of feeling. It is not too manifestly didactic for amusement, yet the author never loses sight of a moral aim.

INTELLIGENCE.

THE FEDERAL-STREET (BOSTON, U.S.) CHURCH CASE.*

[The Chief Justice then went into an historical examination of the colony and province laws of Massachusetts on the subject of religion, and then proceeded as follows:]

The first question, and that which lies at the foundation of this prosecution, is, whether this transaction constitutes a public charity.

After this lapse of time, and in the absence of full records, we must depend for the facts mainly on the deed of Little to Glen, and the award of referees in pursuance of which it was made, the recitals contained in these documents, and the inferences of facts to be fairly drawn from them.

From these documents we think it is clearly proved that John Little, George Glen and many other persons, had associated and united themselves together to erect a Presbyterian meeting-house for public worship as early as 1729 or 1730; that they had agreed with Deering for the lot of land at the price of £550, nearly two thousand dollars; that they agreed with John Little, one of their number, that he should take a deed from Deering in his own name, but for the benefit of the society; that he should proceed and make contracts for labour and materials, and erect a suitable house; to enable him to do which, the money raised by the associates, and probably the notes or obligations of some who did not pay money, were placed in Little's hands as the common agent. After four or five years, and probably after the meeting-house was nearly or quite finished, and after pews had been formed and some of them, if not all, sold or otherwise appropriated to some of the members of the society, a controversy arose, between Little on the one part and the congregation on the other, in regard to their rights.

After reviewing the award in this matter, the Chief Justice directed his attention to a conveyance in the form of an indenture, made June 9, 1735. This deed, by apt words, in consideration of £140. 0*s.* 5*d.*, the precise amount of the balance awarded Little, conveys to Glen, Hall, Shaw and Knox, the land, bounded and described, also the meeting-house on the same, with all privileges, reserving to said Little the grantor, his heirs and assigns, the pew and seat therein, then in his possession, to remain good to him, his heirs and assigns for ever, in the same manner as the rest of the proprietors do hold and enjoy their respective rights, which right was ascertained by the award of Sheaf, Bouteneau and Vans; to have and to hold the land, meeting-house, premises and appurtenances (saving and reserving as aforesaid), to said Glen, Hall, Shaw and Knox, in their capacity aforesaid, and to their successors in that trust and office for ever, "but to and for the only proper use, benefit and behoof of said congregation (according to the tenures and after the same manner as the Church of Scotland hold and enjoy the lands whereon the meeting-houses are erected) for ever, and for no other intent, use or purpose whatsoever," with warranty, &c.

We have now to inquire what effect this conveyance had upon the respective parties. In the first place, it seems quite clear that it transferred the premises, and vested the entire legal estate in the four grantees. We say nothing at present as to the quantity of estate, whether for life or in fee; we shall consider that point hereafter. A good legal estate passed from the grantor, and vested in the grantees. But it was so vested in them, to and for the only proper use, benefit and behoof of the said congregation for ever, and for no other use, intent or purpose whatsoever. This created an estate in trust; for though the words "in trust" are not used in this deed, yet as the habendum is to them and their successors in that trust, it sufficiently describes them as trustees by implication. But further, and this puts the matter beyond doubt, where property is conveyed to the use of a party not capable of taking the legal estate, it cannot vest in the *cestui que use*, by the statute of uses; therefore, by a well-known rule of instruction early engrafted on the St. H. 8., it constitutes an estate in trust, in the first taker. They therefore took an estate in trust for the congregation. Though the term congregation, as in the present case, designates a number of persons associated, but not incorporated, so that they are incapable by law

* Continued from p. 650.

to take a legal estate by such conveyance, yet it is a good description of persons who may be *cestuis que trust*, and beneficially interested. In general it may be said that the congregation, before the sale of pews, consists of those who have in fact united together, and by mutual agreement under seal or by any less formal mode, by the subscription of papers or otherwise, have agreed to form a religious society, and have contributed, or bound themselves to contribute, towards the cost of buildings and the support of public worship. As agreement and union are the essence of such voluntary religious societies, we are not prepared to say that persons not able to contribute to the pecuniary means of such society, but otherwise capable of being useful and desirable associates, might not be received as members. But as there is nothing to shew that there were any persons included in this congregation but those who had contributed or promised money, it is not necessary to go further than to determine that those who have thus united and contributed shall be deemed members. Where pews have been sold, or have been assigned and set apart, to be held in severalty, this is conclusive evidence that such pewholders are members of the congregation. If such pews are sold and assigned to contributors, and most of them probably would be, because it is a probable conclusion, that the largest contributors and the most efficient promoters of the enterprize would be likely to take pews, they would of course be members. But even if sold to strangers, it must be in pursuance of some by-law or regulation agreed upon by the actual associates and members of the congregation, and therefore such sale of a pew would be conclusive evidence of their assent to accept and receive such purchaser of a pew as an associate and member.

The right to a pew, although everywhere in Massachusetts it is regarded as property, and in every part of the State except Boston as real estate, and in Boston as personal estate, yet it is property of a peculiar nature, derivative and dependent. It is an exclusive right to occupy a particular portion of a house of public worship under certain restrictions. The owner of a pew is not a tenant in common of the estate on which the house stands; the legal estate is in the corporation, if the religious society be one, or in the trustees, if the property be vested in them to the use of the congregation, forming a religious society for public worship. Whoever else, therefore, may be, or claim to be, *cestuis que trust*, the holders of pews are clearly entitled to stand in that relation. For whom then were these grantees constituted trustees? The answer is, For a body of individuals who had united together and contributed of their means, to purchase land and erect a house of public worship,—a body of individuals as capable at that time of being designated, ascertained and identified by proof, as if they had been actually enumerated in the deed. It is no answer to this, that now, after the lapse of over a century, when all parties are long since dead and no records can be produced, that it would be difficult to ascertain and prove who were then designated under the name "congregation." Nor is it material. The character of the conveyance must be ascertained by the facts as they existed at the time it was made. And it appears to us, that it was a conveyance in trust for the sole use of a religious society, consisting of persons who had united to form a religious society, had contributed the whole amount necessary to purchase the land and build the house, and who had caused a conveyance to be made to several persons to hold in trust for them, because they were incapable in law to take the legal estate to themselves as an aggregate body. It was a mere naked trust; the whole beneficial interest was in the contributors, the congregation.

After minutely surveying the facts, the Chief Justice said—The Court are unable to perceive in this transaction any of the characteristics of a charitable foundation, to be vindicated by the public, through the Attorney-General, on the ground that those who ought to reap the benefit of it are incapable of vindicating their own rights.

In the first place, it is entirely wanting in the quality of gift, donation or gratuity, from anybody to anybody. Deering was paid a full consideration for the land by Little; Little was paid a full consideration for the land and building and all incidental expenses, including his own services "with respect to his attendance upon and looking after the building of the said meeting-house." It was not a purchase by the grantees, and a donation from them to the congregation; for they acted in a representative capacity for themselves and the congregation. Be-

sides, the award was to make a deed to the congregation, thereby shewing that the whole consideration moved from them; and the probability is, that in proceeding to carry that award into effect by a conveyance, they were informed that a deed in those terms would not be good, because they were not a corporation; but a deed to some in trust for the congregation would accomplish the same thing in legal effect, and be a substantial performance of the award.

Nor can we perceive any uncertainty in the persons who took an equitable interest in this grant; they were persons capable of asserting and vindicating their own equitable rights in a judicial tribunal. Even if it constituted a dedication to a special Presbyterian religious use, as among each other, so that each one should be bound to all the rest, and all to each one, that it should not be diverted from such religious use, a trust of which we say nothing at present, it would not constitute a charity, because it is quite definite and certain who were the persons beneficially interested in such use, and they, and they only, could claim its execution in a court of justice or elsewhere. And we do not perceive in it any public, general or indefinite object, such as preaching the gospel, or any particular form of the gospel, to the poor generally, or to any particular class of poor, or to any persons gratuitously who might, at any future time, choose to attend on such ministrations at that place. No such design or purpose is stated or intimated. On the contrary, it was to constitute a religious society, for the use of the members and proprietors, who might be pewholders, or of them with other members, according to circumstances.

But it was urged in argument that it is usual in all Christian societies and places of public worship, that all persons who choose may in fact attend, and it is usual to set apart free seats, and so the public are benefited. The fact is undoubtedly so, that persons who desire it may usually attend; but it is matter of courtesy and not of right. On the contrary, any religious society, unless formed under some unusual terms, may withhold this courtesy, and close their doors, or admit whom they please only; and circumstances may be easily imagined in which it would be necessary to their peace and order that they should exercise such right. Were it otherwise, and were the occasional permission of all persons to enter churches and listen to preachers to be regarded as a public or general right, every parish, territorial or poll parish, every society formed by the incorporation of proprietors or pewholders, must be considered as a public charitable institution, to be regulated and controlled by an information filed by the Attorney-General at the relation of any person desirous of attending the religious services of such societies.

The legal rights of a congregation and the law respecting the holding of pews, were then referred to by Chief Justice Shaw in these terms: We consider the case of a grant to a corporation or to trustees, for the uses of a religious society, analogous in this; that whilst the whole legal estate is in the trustees, the whole beneficial interest is in the members: this is usually, and may by proper terms of agreement amongst the associates be exclusively, manifested by deeds of pews, so that the whole beneficial interest is in pewholders. Or, as the holding a title to a pew is conclusive evidence that the holder has a share in the beneficial interest in the estate held by trustees for the use of the congregation, and may include the whole interest, and after a lapse of time no other person can produce evidence of having any such beneficial interest, the trust will be held exclusively for the congregation composed of pewholders and their families, not because, by any general law or ecclesiastical arrangement, pewholders have a right to control the use of the meeting-house, but because, in the particular case, the property was conveyed in trust for the associate body who formed the congregation; the pewholders in such case shew their title to a share in the beneficial interest by their deeds, no other person exhibits any such proof, and therefore pewholders are the only beneficiaries.

Indeed, in later times, especially in Boston, most of the acts of incorporation of religious societies have in terms incorporated the proprietors of pews, which is a convenient and sufficiently certain designation of the persons to be incorporated and to hold as members.

The effect of this is, to make all those who are holders of pews, for the time being, members, so that when they become holders of pews, they become corporators, and when they cease to hold pews, they cease to be corporators. It may be proper to add here,

that it is competent for such a society to make such reasonable by-laws and regulations respecting the sale and purchase of pews, as they think their interests as a religious society may require. And it is usual for such societies to make such regulations in regard to the sale of their pews, and express them in the deeds they issue, as to prevent an indiscriminate sale of pews, and retain some right to elect and determine whom they will associate with, or rather who may associate with them. Otherwise, if it were free to anybody to purchase pews without restraint, a number of people of another denomination, finding pews low, might purchase them and become a majority, and thus turn the proper congregation out of their own house.

After considering and negativing the supposition that Little designed to make a donation of his property and thus establish a charity, the Chief Justice proceeded to consider the averment that Little and the others had designed to create a trust for the support of the Christian religion according to a particular form. On this important part of the case, and to the end of the judgment, we give the words of the Chief Justice without abridgment.

The next paragraph in the information reiterates the averment that, by the said deed, the said Little, Glen and others, created a trust or charitable estate of a very high character, to wit: for the support of the Christian religion according to a certain form of worship. No new fact is stated; this paragraph refers for authority to the deed alone; calling it a charitable estate does not make it so, and we have already stated that by the deed, though there might be a trust, there was no charity established.

Having come to the conclusion that this suit, as an information in equity to establish, declare or regulate a public charity, cannot be maintained, perhaps it might be better to stop here. But as it has been insisted in the argument that the complaint by which this suit was commenced may be regarded as a bill in equity to investigate and enforce the rights of parties aggrieved by a breach of the trust set forth, as well as an information in equity in behalf of the public, though upon reading the complaint we should have hardly considered it as being of that character,—and as there are precedents, we believe, for thus combining in one prosecution the vindication of private together with public rights, it may not be considered inappropriate to consider briefly some of the other questions discussed in the argument.

The supposed trust for maintaining in said religious society the doctrine, faith, discipline and mode of worship of the Presbyterian Church exclusively, is found in the clause in the deed from Little to Glen and others, contained in a parenthesis in the habendum, after the words, "to the only proper use of said congregation" (according to the tenures and after the same manner as the Church of Scotland holds and enjoys the lands whereon the meeting-houses are erected).

In terms, this applies to the tenure or mode of holding the land. It is a little doubtful whether in this clause the parties intended the Church of Scotland, spoken of as a whole, or the parish churches of Scotland as separate societies. But whether the one or the other, it would be impossible for these trustees, or any trustees in Masachusetts, so to hold this estate.

It appears, by the evidence, that before the Reformation the whole territory of Scotland was divided into parishes, and since the firm establishment of the Presbyterian Church as the established religion of Scotland, a lot of land is set apart in each parish for a church edifice, and probably for a manse or parsonage-house, and other parish purposes, and this land is specially and inalienably appropriated by law to the support of public worship, conformably to the faith, discipline and practice of the Presbyterian Church. It also appears that, by law, the heritors or landholders in each parish are bound to pay for the erection and repairs of churches. The land therefore could not be held here, as it was held in Scotland, for parish purposes. But suppose we look beyond the letter, to the real purposes of this body of Christians, what were they? Whatever might be their desire to bring themselves under the power and protection of the Church of Scotland, it was impossible, because it appears that the Church of Scotland never did, as a hierarchy or ecclesiastical judicatory, take any jurisdiction of the Presbyterian churches of this country. Supposing their wish was to approach as nearly as practicable to the condition, and for that purpose to place themselves under the protection and jurisdiction of some presbytery in this country, a difficulty would still meet

them. By the established hierarchy of Scotland, each parish has its Kirk session, of teacher and elders; a number of parishes together form a Presbytery of the bounds, having jurisdiction over all the parishes within those bounds; and several Presbyteries form a Synod; and over the whole church is a General Assembly, formed by delegates from all the Synods. Each inferior judicatory is subordinate to the next superior. This jurisdiction in all matters of spiritual or ecclesiastical concern is authoritative and fixed by law, and no parish or church can avoid it. If therefore any number of parishioners, or if nearly the whole, became heretical in faith or irregular in practice, they may be excommunicated, and then they can have no share in parish privileges or voice in parish concerns. If they secede, they may be removed, and the property will be taken possession of by the Presbytery of the bounds, to be retained until another orderly congregation can be formed within the parish. For though the Presbytery will exercise only a spiritual jurisdiction, yet as the right of any parishioner, or any number of parishioners, depends on their being in regular standing with the church, as soon as they are deposed by the ecclesiastical authority, they lose all benefit of the property appropriated by law to the support of the Established Church. Nothing similar could take place in this country.

But to take the most liberal view of the matter, and suppose they intended to establish a religious society conformable, in point of religious belief, doctrine and discipline, according to the usages of the Church of Scotland, as nearly as circumstances would permit, as there could be no Presbytery of the bounds to exercise authority over them;—they must of course connect themselves by their own voluntary act with some Presbytery, Synod, or Presbyterian jurisdiction; and as such submission would be purely voluntary on their part, it is difficult to say that they could not withdraw and unite themselves with some other Presbytery, or become independent, when, as a body, they should think fit so to do.

But it was maintained that although there could be little or no analogy between a Presbyterian church thus formed under trustees in this country, and the regular parish churches of Scotland, where the lands are allotted and not held by trustees, yet that there is a strong analogy between the society established under trustees in Long Lane, and the chapels or meeting-houses established in large parishes, where the parishioners become too numerous to be accommodated at the parish church, and where land is purchased and vested in trustees, to form a religious society in connection with the Church of Scotland.

There is certainly a considerable outward analogy between the society in Long Lane and these chapels, which may for convenience be called chapels of ease, the land being vested in trustees, in trust for a religious society in connection with the Established Church, a very interesting account of which is given by the learned advocate, John Schank More, Esq., who has been examined as a witness in this case. It seems that the deed we have been examining had been submitted to him; and he describes these chapels or meeting-houses which have been erected in connection with the Church of Scotland, and which are held under trust, similar to the trust created by the deed of the 9th of June, 1735, in regard to the meeting-house in Boston, of which he had seen a printed copy. He states that these chapels are usually held under trusts, and they are either expressly or by inference declared to be held for the use of a congregation in connection with the Church of Scotland. And it has been decided in regard to chapels or meeting-houses held under such trusts, that the Presbytery of the bounds may, in the event of any violation of the trust, reclaim the land and the meeting-house itself, and may insist on its being devoted exclusively to the use of a congregation in communion with the Church of Scotland, as by law established. This holds, not merely where the congregation have become Independents and repudiate the Presbyterian polity, but also where they retain the Presbyterian polity, if they do not retain their connection with the Established Church. That is, this rule extends to seceders from the existing Established Church, although adhering in all respects to the faith, doctrine and discipline. For this, he cites several decisions by Scottish civil tribunals; amongst others, *Presbytery of Edinburgh* v. *Trustees of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel.* He adds, that in case of any change of doctrine or discipline, of becoming Unitarian or Congregational, the church would forfeit all right to the enjoyment of the meeting-house;

and the Presbytery of the bounds, as representing the Church of Scotland, would be entitled to claim the chapel, and to insist that it should be exclusively occupied for the use of a congregation in connection with the Established Church. This view is substantially confirmed by the testimony of another learned advocate, Alexander Shank Cook, Esq. Both of them distinctly state that these results flow from the existing law of the land. It is confirmed also by Dr. Hill. A circumstance is stated in the testimony of Dr. Forsyth which tends to explain this matter, which is, that such chapels in aid of the regular parish meeting-houses were usually built by contribution; but they could not be established without a special authority from the General Assembly, called a "Constitution," and whatever other provisions were made by such Constitution, in favour of pewholders or other members, it was the invariable practice to insert a clause in such Constitution, that the chapel should be held to the use of a congregation in connection with the Established Church.

The Constitution of these chapels certainly very much resembles in form and tenure that of the Presbyterian society in Long Lane in Boston. The first remark to be made is that these special Presbyterian churches were not introduced till about 1750, and could not have been regarded as a model by the society in Boston in 1735. But supposing this to be similar to those formed later in Scotland, and supposing it be asked why, according to the testimony, upon this church becoming Congregational in 1786, or Unitarian afterwards, they did not forfeit all right to the property, and why did it not become vested in some Presbytery, for the use of the Presbyterian Church? the answer we think simply is, that the law of Scotland and the law of Massachusetts when this conveyance was made, and when this meeting-house was built, and thence to the present time, have been wholly different. In Scotland, the Presbyterian religion was established by law; the whole territory was divided into parishes and presbyteries by territorial limits; every meeting-house which could be built must be within the limits of some territory, over which there was a controlling power, entirely paramount to that of the congregation or trustees. One of these chapels could not be constituted without being expressly devoted to the use of the Presbyterian Church; because, if otherwise constituted, they would be mere Dissenters, and not recognized in any respect as Presbyterian. Then, by force of law, if any one of these congregations changed its doctrine or form of worship, here was a power, not merely a spiritual or ecclesiastical power, but a civil power, exerting the acknowledged and irresistible law of the land, legally authorized to remove them and hold the property until a Presbyterian congregation should be formed in its place.

In Massachusetts, no such law existed; on the contrary, every religious society, unless restrained by some special trust, by the general law were at liberty to change their denomination, to profess and peaceably to inculcate any faith or doctrine, and adopt the form of worship most agreeable to themselves, and, by doing so, no forfeiture could be incurred. There was no Presbytery of the bounds, to declare any forfeiture, or take possession of the chapel or other estate of any such seceding church. If a religious society, attached to the tenets and practices of the Presbyterian Church, chose to attach themselves to any Presbyterian community, it was their voluntary act, it was for spiritual edification and assistance only, and any superior ecclesiastical judicatory, presbytery, synod, or general assembly, could act only by spiritual censures, and had no jurisdiction over their temporalities.

From the testimony of the learned Scottish jurists who have aided us with their testimony, we think it highly probable that if asked they would have expressed the opinion that, if a conveyance, like that from Little to Glen and others, had been made in Scotland, and afterwards the congregation had become Unitarian or otherwise Congregational, the estate would have been forfeited, and might be claimed and held by the Presbytery of the bounds. And, for myself, I have no hesitation in saying that I should concur with them in that opinion. But it would be so entirely by force of the law of the land, not merely of ecclesiastical regulations and usages, but by the municipal law, recognized and enforced by the civil tribunals.

But as no such law does exist or has existed in this State, it is manifest these rules can have no bearing on the present case.

We would not be understood to ex-

press an opinion that, under our law, an owner of property may not dispose of it, upon special trust, to maintain and inculcate any doctrines of Christianity clearly and specially designated, or to carry on any form of Christian worship specially and intelligibly described and specified; because an owner of property, with a general power of disposing of that property, may devote it to any purpose not unlawful, and, if so, he may do it in the form of a trust. It is one of the incidents to the right of property. But he must do it in terms so clear as to leave no doubt. A court of equity, under its general power and duty to see that trusts are not perverted, and upon the application of proper parties and upon proper issues, may be obliged to inquire into the fact, whether such doctrines have been professed and promulgated, such forms of worship adopted or rejected, not to decide whether such doctrines are sound, but whether the trustee has conscientiously done that without which he has no good right to hold the property or to use it as he has done. Such we take to be the case of Lady Hewley's charity, Shore *v.* Wilson, 9 Cl. and Fin, 355, and many other cases cited in the argument, as decided in England and in this country.

These cases have no direct bearing upon the question, and we have alluded to them only for the purpose of avoiding any wrong construction which might arise from our view of the Scotch cases, and the whole of the evidence upon the subject.

Supposing, then, the whole practice and usage of Scotland, both in 1735 and since, both in regard to parish churches and to chapels or meeting-houses established in connection with the Established Church, and the property vested in trustees, to be inapplicable, because they depended upon the law of Scotland, and because there was no Presbytery of the bounds, within which Boston was situated, which was authorized or capable of exercising a paramount jurisdiction, or taking any jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in Boston, the nearest approach they could make to the establishment of a religious society of a Presbyterian character would seem to be, to call and settle a minister professing the faith, and desirous of maintaining the order and discipline, of that Church, by voluntarily associating themselves with other similar societies, and thus forming a presbytery, to whose jurisdiction, in matters of spiritual concern, they would submit themselves, according to the forms of proceeding in the Church of Scotland. We say the forms, because no presbytery which they could thus voluntarily form could exercise a permanent authority in temporal concerns, for want of the law of the land to establish it. It appears, from the imperfect records produced, that the society, by the minister, Mr. Moorhead, did unite themselves with the presbytery of Londonderry, but after his death, in 1773, they declined the jurisdiction, and that declination was afterwards by another presbytery, to whom they applied, pronounced to be regular. But without tracing their changes, or inquiring whether all or either of the ecclesiastical bodies with whom they voluntarily associated conformed truly to the doctrine, discipline and form of worship and church government of the Church of Scotland, during the twelve or thirteen years which elapsed between the time of Mr. Moorhead's decease and the vote of 1786, we are brought to consider the fact and the effect of the proceedings of that date.

It appears that Rev. Robert Annan, the last Presbyterian minister, received a call to a parish in New York, which was communicated to the presbytery in February, 1786; and notice being ordered to the society in Boston to shew cause, they made no appearance, and no doubt the call was allowed and accepted.

In August following, at a meeting of the proprietors and others of the Presbyterian church in Long Lane, it was voted unanimously, that the church and congregation do embrace the Congregational mode of government, and that all difficulties in the church hereafter be settled by the minister or male members of the church.

It further appears from the evidence, that they not only voted to renounce Presbyterianism and become Congregational, they acted accordingly, and soon after settled Dr. Belknap, and have ever since acted as a Congregational church and society. Also that, in 1803, an Act of the Legislature was passed, entitled, "An Act declaring and confirming the *Incorporation*," &c., thereby implying the existence of a previous Act, though none appears. We believe it was decided in the early part of the present century, that an incorporation of a parish might be presumed from length of time, and the actual, long and uninterrupted use of corporate

powers, though I am not aware of any reported case. It was so decided in the case of towns. The Act then proceeds to incorporate all the persons who now are or may hereafter be proprietors in the pews in the Congregational meeting-house in Federal Street, and they are declared and confirmed to be a corporation by the name of the Proprietors of the Meeting-house in Federal Street, in the town of Boston.

Now in regard to the vote of 1786, supposing this society so constituted a religious society under the deed of Little to Glen and others, by a mutual agreement and compact in the nature of a mutual trust, all for each and each for all, to maintain public worship according to the faith and creed, form and worship, and as nearly as practically they could to the discipline and form of government of the Church of Scotland, we are strongly inclined to the opinion that, by the unanimous consent of all legally and beneficially interested, they could change or wholly relinquish such trust. It is to be considered that the trustees were also *cestuis que trust;* that their rights, as also the pews of all the pewholders, were descendible and transmissible to heirs; that the pewholders were certainly *cestuis que trust* beneficially interested, and there is no evidence that any other person than pewholders had any interest, legal or equitable, in the estate. The evidence shews that the vote was unanimous, and there is no evidence to control it or raise a doubt of its truth. It is alleged in the information, but denied in the answer, that there was a minority who opposed this change, but that they were overborne by a majority. As no evidence was offered to prove this averment, the answer is conclusive, and the fact is not proved.

Supposing, then, a trust created for a religious use, for persons specially designated, for their own use, not general and indeterminate so as to constitute a charity, and all persons interested, trustees and *cestuis que trust*, change their religious views, become sincerely converted to another mode of Christian faith, and desire another form of worship, why should they not make the change? The trust is created, if at all, out of the right of property; the change is desired and effected by all those who have any interest, legal or equitable, in that property. Who is then to object? Whose rights are impaired? It is contrary to no law; all sects and denominations are equal before the law. It opposes no public policy; on the contrary, it is an advancement of the policy declared by the Constitution in the third article of the declaration of rights. In this respect, a religious society thus constituted, by making some trustees to hold the legal estate, but for the use of themselves and others designated, are very similar to a poll parish incorporated by statute, or under the Religious Freedom Acts; and though they be of one denomination when incorporated, we are aware of no rule of law or principle of equity which prevents them from changing their creed and modifying their practice, as their own consciences and views of propriety may dictate. We think the same rule applies in the present case, where the vote was unanimous. What would be the effect in this respect if one or more had opposed, we have no occasion to consider.

We have said that, in the case supposed, we are inclined to the opinion that the change of denomination would be justifiable, and put an end to the trust. We do not state it more strongly, because perhaps there were persons interested not present at the meeting and not notified, but more particularly because we do not place our judgment on that ground. But it leads to another consideration which we consider more decisive, and that is the law of limitations.

It has sometimes been said that the statutes of limitation do not extend *proprio vigori* to suits in equity in England, although it is everywhere conceded that the principle is adopted. It is thus stated; though the statute bars only legal remedies, yet courts of equity, by their own rules, independently of any statute of limitations, give great effect to length of time. But in the same case, a court of equity, in deciding on the effect of a statute of limitation of Jamaica, which in the nature of presumption went to quiet the title after an adverse possession and the lapse of some years, held that the statute of limitation was as binding on a court of equity as a court of law. Beckford *v.* Wade, 17 Ves.

And in this State it has been decided that the statute of limitations, barring suits after a certain time, extends as well to equity suits as to suits at law, as a proper bar. Farnam *v.* Brooks, 9 Pick. 212. Baker *v.* Atlas Bank, 9 Met. 182.

In the first of these cases, the court say, in the opinion expressed by Chief

Justice Parker, that in this court as much force must be given to the statute when pleaded to a bill in equity as to an action of common law, and it can be avoided in the same way only, that is, by proof of fraudulent concealment and a discovery of the fraud within the time of limitation. And he cites a great number of authorities, English and American, to support this decision.

It is true that in a direct question between trustees and *cestuis que trust*, the possession of the latter is the possession of the trustees, and cannot be adverse. But when another party, not acknowledging the trust, but denying that any such affecting the estate has been created, or asserting that it has been fully performed or released or discharged, or otherwise does not exist, and claiming adversely both to trustee and *cestuis que trust*, such a possession is adverse; and if all those who would have a right to question it lie by and acquiesce during the time of limitation, the statute is a bar.

In the present case, we are inclined to the opinion that the possession became adverse by the vote of 1786, and the holding under it. They were in possession and had the right of possession, whether in trust or not is the question. They declared publicly by their acts and votes that, under a claim of right to do so, they held it for a purpose inconsistent with a Presbyterian use exclusively; that if any such trust ever had existed, it had ceased to exist, and they denied and repudiated it. It is not now the question whether they have a right to do so, and whether their possession was lawful, but whether it was adverse. If it was, then all those who had any claims, legal or equitable, including all synods and Presbyterian bodies with whom they had at any time been associated, were bound to come forward and assert their rights; otherwise, their consent was to be presumed. We believe the statute of limitations was not then in force; but the rule of twenty years' acquiescence in similar cases was held. That vote was passed nearly seventy years ago.

But whether that vote and the acts and possession under it are to operate as a bar or not, we are of opinion that the Act declaring and confirming the incorporation of the proprietors of pews in the Congregational meeting-house, together with the acceptance of the same and acts of the parties under it, continued during the period of limitation, is such bar. The Act declares that the corporation shall be deemed in law seized of the meeting-house, lands, &c., including the dwelling-house then recently erected on the land appurtenant for the accommodation of the minister of said society, reserving to the several proprietors of the pews their right to and interest in the said pews respectively. This created the tenure like those by which the lands were held on which other meeting-houses in Massachusetts have been built and maintained, vesting an estate in the house and land in the corporation itself, with an estate in the holders of pews, peculiar, subordinate and derivative, still an estate and property recognized and protected by law. This, we add in passing, ascertains and identifies the rights of pewholders in Massachusetts so definitely, as to render the evidence offered in this case respecting the rights of pewholders, both in parish churches and separate chapels, in Scotland, and those of Canada and the other States of the Union, of little importance as evidence of the rights of holders of pews in Massachusetts. The same remark may be repeated here which has been before made, that it is not the name or fact alone which decides the rights of the parties, but the facts existing in connection with the governing law of the place, giving their whole significance, and on which the legal and equitable rights of parties depend and must be determined. There are no doubt persons holding pews or separate seats in the parish churches and Presbyterian chapels in Scotland, in Episcopal churches and in Dissenting meeting-houses in England, and perhaps in similar churches and chapels in Canada and in the other States, all of whom hold a relation to their churches and places of worship similar in fact, in many respects, to that of pewholders in Massachusetts; but the measure, the extent and limitations of their rights incident to such relation, must depend on the laws acknowledged and enforced in their respective places; and these laws are so various, that no just inference can be drawn from the rights of the one to those of the other.

The Act declaring and confirming the incorporation "of those who now are or who may hereafter be proprietors of the pews in the Congregational meeting-house in Federal Street, in the town of Boston," was passed in June, 1805; the proprietors were then in the actual

and exclusive possession till some time after 1846, when a demand was made upon them by the relators, who formed a Presbyterian society in Boston in that year. Regarding the question as affecting the realty, these acts would seem to constitute a seizin either by right or by wrong, and of course a disseizin of trustees and *cestuis que trust*, claiming to hold for a different purpose, and against whom such entry and holding by the respondent society must be deemed adverse; and after the lapse of twenty years, or perhaps, as the law then stood, thirty years, from the time of such acts, all right of entry and of action would be barred. In fact, the Act itself implies that this had been long in possession before its date, and more than forty years elapsed, after its passage, before their right was questioned. If this would have been a good bar at law on a question of title in a real action, *a fortiori* must it be regarded, as a long-continued adverse possession, sufficient to preclude all claim in equity.

The conclusions, then, to which the Court have come are these: that by the transactions of 1730-35, between Little, Glen and their associates, and the deed from Little to Glen and others, they did not intend to form, and did not in fact form or found any public charity or any charitable foundation whatever;—that it was their intention to establish, and they did establish, a parish and religious society for themselves and their families, their associates, successors and assigns, and had full right and lawful authority under the laws of Massachusetts to adopt such Christian doctrines, form of worship and church discipline, as were consistent with the dictates of their own consciences and sense of duty and propriety, and to alter and change the same from time to time;—that the whole property and interest in the land, church edifice and buildings, remained in the trustees and associates, who, by their united and continued will and action, might control and dispose of them;—that they manifested a desire to organize themselves into a religious society in conformity, as nearly as practicable, with the doctrines, discipline and practice of the Church of Scotland or Presbyterian Church; that if this manifested a preference of that form of worship, and a mutual agreement amongst themselves in the nature of a trust to and for each other, still it was one which by mutual consent, and especially by unanimous consent, they could alter and change for their own benefit; that by the unanimous vote of the proprietors in 1786, they did alter and change it by the consent of all parties interested in the preservation of that trust, by which it was terminated and discharged;—that if the deed from Little to Glen and others vested the legal estate in them as trustees in fee, such estate descended to their heirs, and is now outstanding in such heirs; and were it now a question of legal title between such heirs and the respondent society, the fact that the respondents were in possession in 1805 claiming title, that the Act therein passed declared them seized in fee of the estate as a corporation, their acceptance of the Act, and holding under the same peaceably and adversely more than forty years, would be a disseizin of the trustees and bar of their legal title; and as the respondent society claimed to hold adversely as well against the *cestuis que trust* as the trustees, such possession for such length of time is a bar alike to all legal and equitable claims to the estate in controversy.

SOUTHERN UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of the Southern Unitarian Society took place at the chapel in Canal Walk, Southampton, on Thursday, Oct. 11th. The Rev. D. Griffith, of Wareham, introduced the service, and the Rev. William Forster, of Kentish Town, preached a heart-stirring discourse from 1 Cor. iii. 11, 12, 13, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." In the evening, the Rev. J. Porter, of Ringwood, conducted the devotional service, and the Rev. William Forster addressed a delighted audience from the prophecy, "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: and in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.)

At the business meeting of the Society after the morning service, the Rev. H. Hawkes occupied the chair, and the Secretary, the Rev. E. Kell, read the annual report, which was unanimously adopted, on the motion of Edward Dixon, Esq., seconded by William Mortimer, Esq., who, with our venerable

patriarch of the district, the Rev. J. Fullagar, are the sole surviving founders of the Society. Besides the usual resolutions of most cordial thanks to the preacher, and appointment of the officers and Committee, the following resolutions were passed:

It was moved by the Rev. D. Griffith, seconded by the Rev. E. Kell, "That this meeting having for many years felt the value of the publications of the Christian Tract Society to their catalogue, in furnishing suitable instruction to Sunday-schools, Domestic Missions and the poor, beg to express their sense of the great usefulness of that Society to the cause of Christian morality, and most earnestly call upon all interested in the literature of the poor to promote its prosperity."

It was moved by Mr. Lovegrove, seconded by Mr. Burgess, "That this meeting rejoice in the progress which has been made in the Legislature towards the abolition of church-rates, and earnestly hope and trust that this sacred object may be fully attained during the ensuing session of Parliament."

It was moved by the Rev. E. Kell, seconded by Mr. Tapp, of London, "That this meeting regard with great satisfaction the fact that a brother of the house of Israel is appointed to the chief magistracy of the British Metropolis, and most earnestly pray that the time may be at hand when variety of religious belief and observance shall no longer in the British dominions constitute any barrier to equal eligibility to any civil function."

It was moved by the Rev. E. Kell, seconded by the Rev. J. Porter, "That this Society views with disapprobation and regret the departure of the conductors of the British and Foreign School Society from the broad and catholic principle of the founders of that Society, in the sectarian and dogmatic character of the instruction given at the Borough-Road School, London.

"That it is of no small importance in this country to maintain in their integrity such Societies as the British and Foreign School Society and the Bible Society, which are founded on the principle of the common Christianity which is the equal property of all Christian denominations, and which ask the assistance of, as they offer their advantages to, all, independently of sectarian distinctions.

"That for the sake of the great principle of religious liberty, as well as upholding fidelity in the execution of a public trust, it is important that the managers of the British and Foreign School Society should be recalled to a sense of their duty. That we cordially approve of the objects contemplated in the meeting to be held in Birmingham on the 30th inst., and are desirous of doing all in our power to co-operate with it.

"That these resolutions be communicated to Mark Philips, Esq., the Chairman of the meeting at Birmingham."

It was moved by Mr. Dixon, seconded by Mr. Hall, "That this meeting respectfully request the Rev. William Forster to act as its deputy at the meeting in Birmingham on the 30th inst."

It was moved by the Rev. E. Kell, seconded by the Rev. D. Griffith, "That this meeting has heard with great satisfaction of the resolution of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to publish an improved version of the Old Testament; that they have long considered a new translation, retaining as much as possible of the phraseology consecrated to our best affections, as greatly to be desired both for public and private use, and they trust that under the auspices of that body it may be happily accomplished."

The dinner meeting of the Society at the Castle Inn was social, cordial, and left a pervading feeling of satisfaction. The company was addressed by the ministers and gentlemen who had taken part in the day's proceedings. The tone of the speeches was manly and Christian. With the free outspeaking of evils and shortcomings, no asperity, nothing which jarred with the spirit of Christian kindliness, mingled. For this influence the Society was largely indebted to the Rev. William Forster, to Edward Dixon, Esq., the Chairman, and to the general harmony so happily subsisting in the Southampton congregation. Such meetings ought to leave behind them their blessing, their stimulus to progress in all that is good and holy. E. K.

THEOLOGICAL ILLIBERALITY AT HUDDERSFIELD AND ITS FITTING RETRIBUTION.

The opening of the spacious cemetery at Huddersfield has recently given occasion to some remarkable sayings and doings, which deserve to be recorded as significant signs of the times. First of all, the vicar, for reasons unknown to us, declined to carry out the suggestion of the Committee entrusted with

the necessary arrangements, that there should be a religious service in the consecrated chapel in the early part of the day. The Committee then applied to the Dissenters of Huddersfield to open the other portion of the ground with a religious service. In order that the proceedings should be of a catholic nature, and should carry with them the confidence and support of all branches of the Nonconformist church in the district, the Chairman of the Commissioners requested the attendance of a representative minister from every body of Dissenters in the town. They met on Wednesday, the 3rd of October, and again on Thursday, the 4th, to the number of seven, Rev. R. Skinner (an Independent) in the chair. The seven ministers of the seven churches of Huddersfield, in solemn conclave met, were engaged for four hours and a half trying to solve as great a difficulty as they ever encountered, whether six of them could unite with the seventh (a Unitarian heretic) in a religious service to mark the opening of a common burial-place for the dead of all classes and sects and parties. One half the cemetery had already been *consecrated* by the Church by law established. Shall the opening of the other be unmarked by religious recognition of its Christian purposes and associations, and Dissenters be buried in a place which they refuse religiously to set apart for such sacred designation? Or shall they unite in a common service of dedication with one, the members of whose flock, as those of their own, were there to find a last earthly resting-place for their mortal ashes? This the alternative. The desirableness of such a service as proposed was affirmed in a resolution passed unanimously at the second meeting after nearly two hours' discussion, difficulty after difficulty having been got over. But though deemed desirable by all, and thought practicable by several, yet there was no coming to any decision, and the patience of some was nigh exhausted. After many had been laid, a new objection, destined to prove fatal, was at length started, viz., that the very fact of uniting in a religious service with a Unitarian, might leave the impression on the public mind that after all the differences between Trinitarian and Unitarian were less vital than they were prepared to allow. The objection was not felt by more than one or two, others thinking that themselves and their views were so well known that no such result was likely to ensue. It was then suggested that the assembled ministers should pass a resolution simply throwing the matter back upon the Commissioners, on the ground of not having received notice sufficiently long to enable them to make the necessary arrangements. Against this, one of the seven protested, saying that though it might be true in letter, it was false in spirit, and if they could not unite in the service, they must honestly allege the true reason, and embody it in a resolution. Eventually this resolution was put: "That whilst this meeting entirely concurs in the propriety of a religious service in connection with the opening of the cemetery, it was found on consideration that there were serious practical difficulties, felt on the part of several gentlemen, arising from difference in theological opinion, which would prevent the various parties uniting satisfactorily in the service." This was allowed to pass, as the only practicable result, only two voting for, none opposing. The two resolutions were sent to the Commissioners, and so far as the ministers were concerned the matter was at an end. The meeting separated. The whole scene, we are informed, was remarkable. Although courtesy was maintained throughout, utterance was given to some plain truths.

The Commissioners received the resolutions of the Dissenting ministers with regret, and, we may suppose, not without disgust. In a true spirit of liberality, instead of sacrificing the one obnoxious individual, and asking the popular majority to arrange the service without Mr. Montgomery, they came to the resolution to place the matter in the hands of Mr. M. and of those who would co-operate with him, telling the Independent minister who had been the Chairman that if all forsook, then they had resolved to place the service in Mr. Montgomery's hands alone, if he would accept the duty. This resolution was communicated to Mr. Montgomery on Friday, Oct. 5. At noon, he met Rev. J. Hudston (Methodist New Connection) and Rev. S. Chisholm (Scotch Independent), the only two of the six who chose to act with a Unitarian neighbour, and arrangements were without any difficulty made for the service on the following Monday. On that day the weather was fine and the attendance good, notwithstanding the refusal of four-sevenths of the representatives of Huddersfield Nonconformity to join in the service. The first hymn was given out by Mr. Hudston. Mr.

Chisholm read a lesson from the Old Testament, from Job xiv., and offered a prayer. Rev. J. K. Montgomery read the New-Testament lesson from John xi., and then delivered an admirably appropriate and forcible address, which has appeared at length in the two local papers and in the *Inquirer*. Another hymn having been given out by Mr. Stokoe (Methodist New Connection), Mr. Hudston delivered a very excellent address, and after another hymn had been sung, dismissed the assembly with a benediction. The *Huddersfield Chronicle* remarks that the service was "most impressive, and produced a marked effect upon the auditory." We have no doubt that some good will result from these remarkable proceedings. Bigotry never looks so contemptible as when it is successfully withstood and markedly defeated. The four absent ministers would have leisure to review and repent the folly into which their bigotry had seduced them, when they saw that the consequence of it was to give the place of honour to an Unitarian, and to make him the foremost representative of the Nonconformist churches of that important town. To the minority who were faithful to the Protestant principle of the right of private judgment, and to the Commissioners who so courageously did their duty, the thanks of all friends of religious liberty are due. Of Mr. Montgomery's conduct throughout this trying business, we would speak with unmingled praise. He was in the first instance far from seeking or expecting a prominent place in the ceremony of dedication; but he felt that it was due to his congregation and to the religious principles they profess, that he should not waive a manifest right, or abandon the claim of religious equality, because others were disposed to look on him with the evil eye of bigotry. When will the ministers of religion in this country perceive that, whilst they are indulging their petty jealousies and theological antipathies, the bulk of the community are passing by them, and advancing to a practical liberality ominous of danger to all the degrees of priestcraft?

TEA-PARTY AT LEEDS.

The settlement of Rev. Thos. Hincks as minister at Mill-Hill chapel, Leeds, as successor to Rev. Chas. Wicksteed, was celebrated on Monday, October 22, by a public tea-party, which was attended by the members of the congregation, and by most of the Unitarian ministers of the West-Riding, and by some other friends from a distance. The congregation was congratulated by Rev. Dr. Hutton on their selection as a minister of one who was a gentleman, a scholar and a spiritual Christian. Mr. Hincks, it is said by the *Leeds Mercury*, took the opportunity of giving his congregation some good practical advice.—At Sheffield, the vacancy occasioned by the removal of Mr. Hincks, is filled up by the election of the Rev. Brooke Herford, of Todmorden.

OBITUARY.

August 27, in the 78th year of his age, Mr. Thomas Temple Silver, of Woodbridge, Suffolk.

When a friend is removed from us in whose society we have delighted, and whose excellent life was an example to all who knew him, it is right that some of the chief features of his character should in some way be communicated to a larger sphere. At the same time it is difficult, the writer feels, to prepare such a notice as in this case seems demanded, and equally to avoid the charge of scantiness or superfluity.

The subject of this memoir was the second of five sons, and was born at Portsmouth, in the year 1778, of parents alike estimable for their qualities of heart and mind, and steadily adherent to the cause of Nonconformity. His father, a physician in extensive practice, was in the habit, nevertheless, of wholly educating his sons from the age of eight to twelve: their mother, formerly a Miss Kirkpatrick, of Newport, Isle of Wight, having the entire charge of them until the former age, and retaining a delightful influence upon their characters in time subsequent to their father's death, which happened at the age of 55, after a most painful illness of above three years' continuance. The parents, previously to their marriage, knowing that they differed widely in religious views (Dr. Silver being an Arian, and his wife a Calvinist), agreed, in the event of their having a family, for the father not to influence the girls, nor the mother the boys, in their religious education. At the Unitarian chapel, within a few doors of their house,

the family attended regularly the morning service, which was then conducted by the excellent and learned Dr. Wren, a man especially distinguished for his philanthropy towards prisoners in the American war, afforded often at the peril of his life, and one who always gained the affections of the young, into whose amusements he most heartily entered. In the afternoon the elder boys in turn accompanied their mother to the chapel of Dr. Bogue, a Calvinist, at Gosport, where for many years she had been a communicant.

During his alternate visits to these places of worship, Mr. Silver, as a boy, appears to have been much disturbed by the difference he noticed in the forms of worship. In a letter addressed lately to the present writer, he thus alludes to this circumstance, which he considered to have had much influence in forming his opinions:—"At a very early age my mind was much disquieted. It puzzled me as a child how such equally good people as my parents were should so differ in their interpretation of the Scriptures. I was determined to read them for myself; and the more I did so, and the stronger my intellect became, the more confirmed I was that my father was right in worshiping one God only, the Father. I found the express command of Jesus Christ to do so. I could not find any part of his instructions which led me to suppose that we were to think of him otherwise than as the Sent of God to instruct us in our duty, and that we ought humbly to strive to follow in his footsteps as closely as to fallible man may be permitted." And in the same letter he expresses a belief that, during a long life, his happiness had been largely increased by his thoughts having early been directed to this view of religion, in which too, in periods of trouble and distress, he had found unfailingly support and solace.

Mr. Silver was, however, a Dissenter not merely from this early habit and instruction. During the seven years of his apprenticeship in London, he was regular in his attendance at the Old Gravel-Pit chapel, Hackney, where the eminent Dr. Priestley then was minister. It was the custom of this good man, at the conclusion of the morning service, to draw around him the younger members of his congregation, and explain any scriptural difficulty they asked of him; and so completely did he gain their confidence, that the most timid woman would forget her reserve in his presence. The same class was continued by his successor, Mr. Belsham: and it was with Mr. Silver a delightful reflection that no weather ever caused his absence from these services, to which he considered that he mainly owed the confirmation of his earlier religious sentiments.

The effects of this training were evinced throughout his life. Equally detesting cant and ostentatious piety, religion was with him not a seventh-day impulse, but a habit of mind. Each morning and evening was consecrated in his household by family prayer, and none of those who have been ever present can forget his beautiful and emphatic reading. Himself a Unitarian, he had yet the widest tolerance for those of other creeds, and allowed his family the freest liberty to form their own opinions. No one was more sensible of divine bounties, or acknowledged them with greater readiness as trusts from God, to be administered in aid of those less favoured. During his long residence in Woodbridge, a period of fifty-five years, his purse was ever open to the needy and the friendless; and he was also mainly instrumental in conferring on the town its British and Foreign Schools, advancing considerable sums for their support, and finally investing sufficient to produce annually eleven pounds towards their maintenance so long as they shall be kept up.

Another valuable trait in his character was his unswerving honesty as a man of business. There are few who knew him intimately but will recollect his horror of an unpaid bill, and his emphatic advocacy of measures to secure that to him greatest luxury, living out of debt. His independence, too, was as marked as his integrity; and, in fact, throughout his life he did more to uphold the proper dignity of trade than is commonly deemed possible without a sacrifice of business interests. People nowadays can scarcely form an estimate of the courage it required to declare oneself a Whig in the time of Horne Tooke's trial, or the amount of social martyrdom incurred by the avowal. But Mr. Silver never shrank from owning his opinions; and, whether in politics or in religion, he carried his consistent advocacy of liberalism to far greater lengths than many would have dared to do, had they been at his counter. Upon one occasion, when canvassed personally by a Conservative nobleman who had dealt somewhat largely with him, he replied, "My Lord, I am one of those who think with Charles James Fox; and I would rather lose my right arm than give you my vote." And it is worthy of some note that neither in this case nor in others similar did he by his firmness ever lose a customer.

Of his social character it is due to say that he was "given to hospitality." Living in a society where few equalled him in intellect, he yet was most solicitous to preserve his neighbours' intimacy, and made his house a meeting-point for all whom he respected, without regard to difference of station or opinions. With few things was he more delighted than to see his friends about him, and those who have been present at his table will not soon forget his hearty and impressive welcome. Liberal beyond those of even greater means, he aimed in all things to promote the happiness and comfort of his fellow-townspeople; while of the affectionate interest which he always took in his friends' welfare, there was abundant proof in his promptness to assist in it.

Having enjoyed throughout life unvarying good health, preserved mainly by regular exercise and habits, he first shewed symptoms of decline upon the death of his wife, to whom for more than forty-five years he had been happily united. His loss of strength was gradual throughout the last twelvemonth, and his final illness mercifully short. He retained his consciousness fully to the end; and upon the writer asking him, a few minutes before he died, if he were in pain, he distinctly whispered, "Not at all." And thus peacefully and quietly, without a shudder or a spasm, did this good man pass away from those who loved him, bringing into mind the language of the Scriptures, "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

A striking testimony to his worth was afforded at his funeral, which was attended by the principal inhabitants of the town, every shop of which was closed during the time of the interment.

Farewell, dear friend! Long will the remembrance of your many virtues be cherished by those who were favoured with your friendship; and precious will be the recollection of your life, characterized as it was by sincerity, adorned with piety, and endeared to us by kindliest beneficence! Of a truth the writer fully shares the sentiment: "*Moveor equidem tali amico orbatus, qualis, ut arbitror, nemo unquam erit: ut confirmari possum, nemo unquam fuit. Sed tamen recorda. tione nostræ amicitiæ sic fruor, ut beatè vixisse videar quia cum eo vixerim.*"—"I am indeed distressed at being bereaved of such a friend as no one, I conceive, will ever be to me again; as no one, I am sure, ever has been yet. But so do I enjoy the recollection of our friendship, that I seem to have lived happily, inasmuch as I have lived with him."

T. F. T.

MARRIAGES.

Aug, 9, at Sevenoaks, PHILIP HENRY, eldest son of the late Nathaniel LAWRENCE, Esq., to CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA, eldest daughter of the late Edward BAILEY, Esq.

Aug. 14, at the Unitarian chapel, High Street, Swansea, by Rev. Matthew Gibson, JOHN, second son of John Henry HOPKINS, Esq., of Seaforth, near Liverpool, to JANE, eldest daughter of John WILLIAMS, Esq., proprietor of the *Cambrian*.

Aug. 30, at the Old meeting-house, Birmingham, by Rev. Charles Clarke, Mr. RICHARD WILMOTT to BETSEY DENNIES.

Sept. 11, at the Unitarian chapel, Maidstone, Mr. SAMUEL DAY to Miss PHŒBE BARTLETT, both of Maidstone.

Sept. 11, at the parish church, Halifax, GEORGE DIXON, Esq., of the Dales, Edgbaston, to MARY, youngest daughter of James STANSFELD, Esq., of Moorlands, Halifax.

Sept. 12, at the Unitarian chapel, Birkenhead, by Rev. R. L. Carpenter, assisted by Rev. James Malcolm, of Chester, THOMAS G. FROST, Jun., Esq., of Chester, to MARY ANNE, only daughter of Henry WOOD, Esq., Fern Hill, Birkenhead.

Sept. 13, at the Old meeting-house, Birmingham, by Rev. Charles Clarke, Mr. THOMAS JAMES HARRIS to MARTHA, second daughter of Mr. Josiah GREEN.

Sept. 13, at St. Mark's church, St. John's Wood, GEORGE, eldest son of G. COURTAULD, Esq., of Bocking, Essex, to MINA, youngest daughter of the late W. BROMLEY, Esq., of Upper Clapton.

Oct. 2, at the Old chapel, Dukinfield, by Rev. R. Brook Aspland, M.A., Mr. JOHN HILTON, of Stalybridge, to JANE, youngest daughter of Mr, Samuel OLDHAM, of the same place.

Oct. 2, at the New meeting-house, Birmingham, by Rev. Samuel Bache, Mr. ARTHUR RYLAND, of that town, to ANNA SMITH, eldest surviving daughter of the late Mr. John PHIPSON, of the same place.

Oct. 9, at the Friar-gate chapel, Derby, by the father of the bride, Mr. JAMES FREEMAN, Jun., of Norwich, to SARAH ELLEN, daughter of Rev. Joseph HUTTON, LL.D., of Derby.